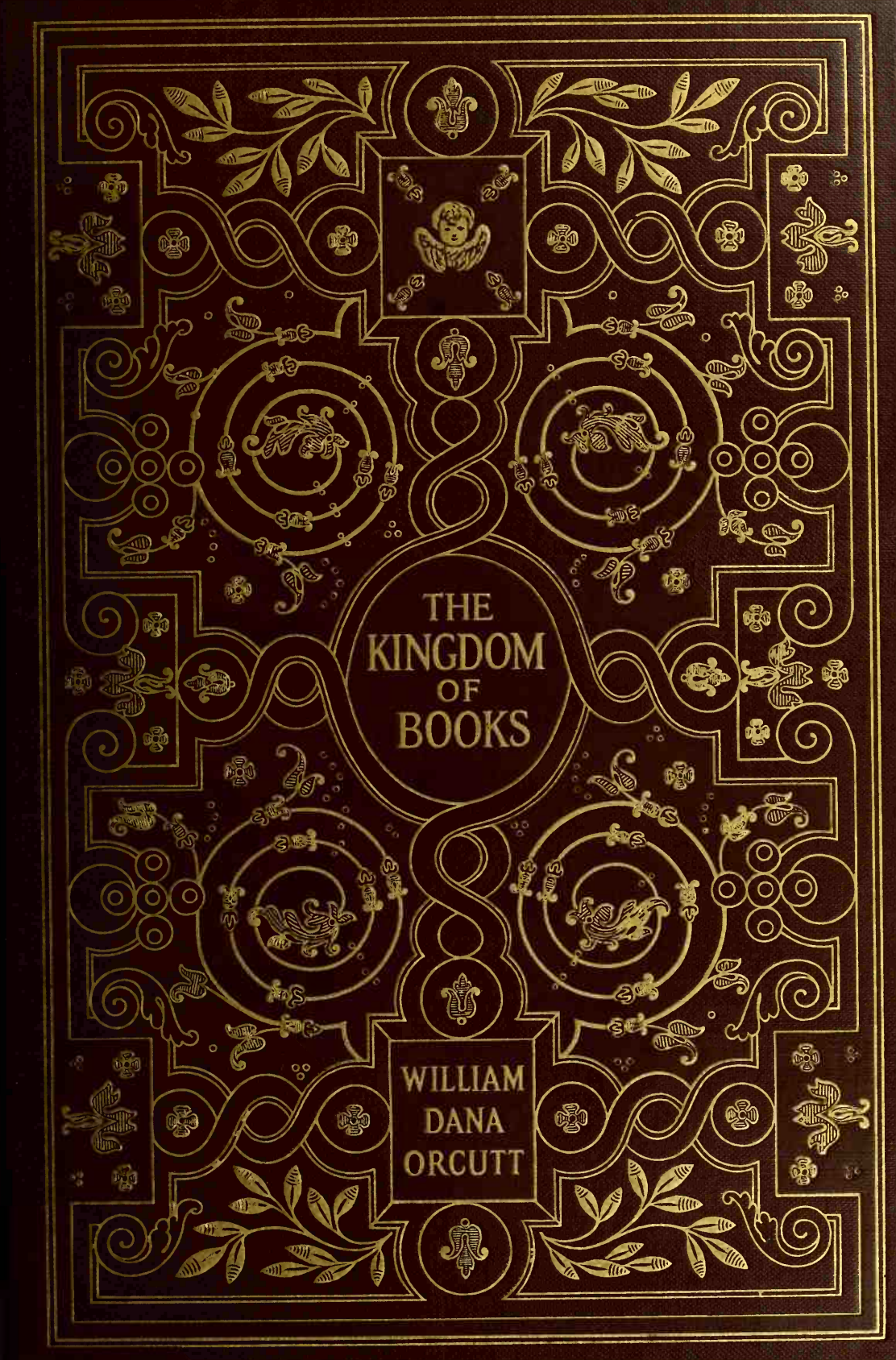
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THE KINGDOM OF BOOKS

Without books, God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in Cimmerian darkness. THOMAS BARTHOLIN (1672)

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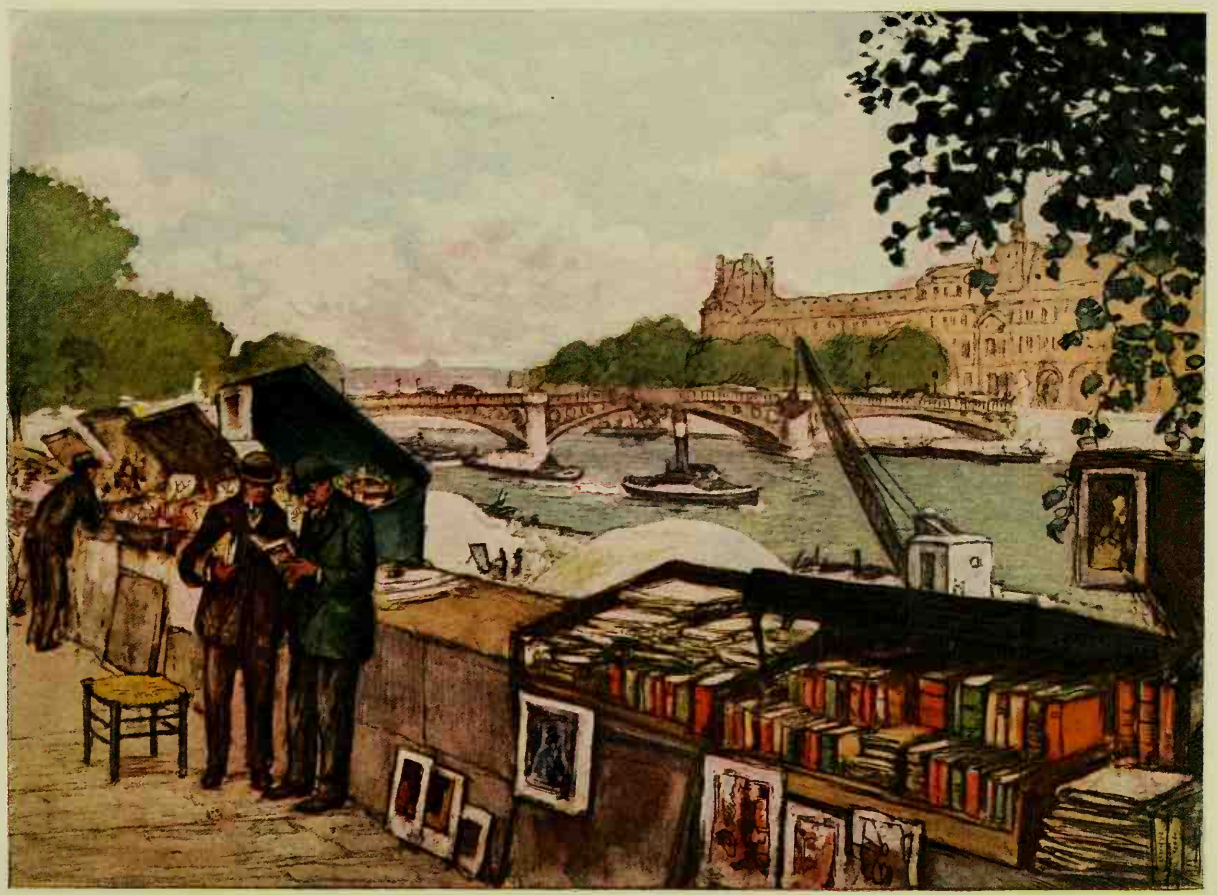

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By

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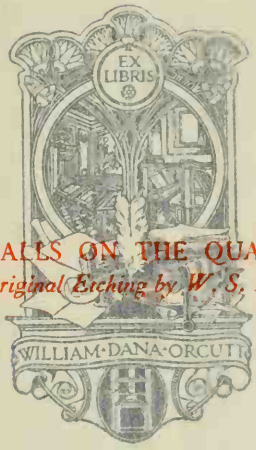

THE BOOKSTALLS ON THE QUAI MALAQUAIS

(From an original Etching by W. S. Lamprecht.)

PUBLISHED · MCMXXVII · BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY

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THE KINGDOM OF BOOKS

By
WILLIAM DANA ORCUTT

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To

ALFRED ROBERT McINTYRE

IN TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP

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CHAPTER I

Prime Ministers to the Book

I

PRIME MINISTERS TO THE BOOK

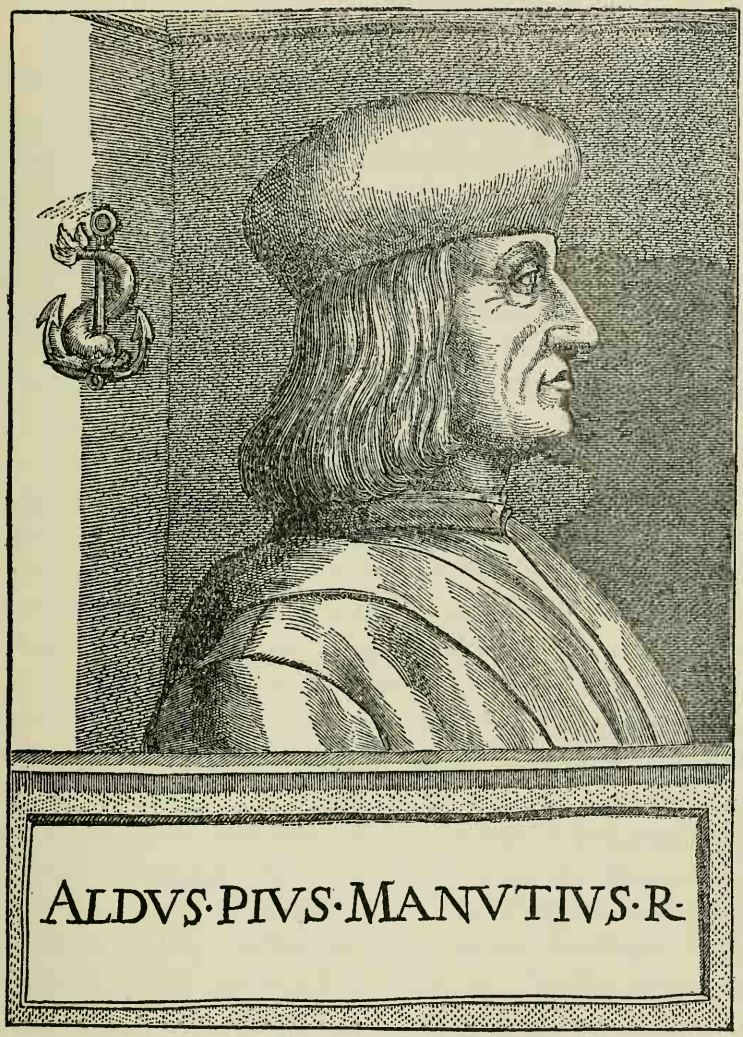
ALL my life I have been seeking a Baedeker to the Kingdom of Books. The longer I seek, the more clearly I understand the collaboration such a guide book would demand, and the territory it would have to cover. But what a volume it would be! The papyrus workers of Egypt and the paper makers of China would unfold their secrets before my very eyes; the ancient scribes and the skilled illuminators would transmit to me the responsibility they accepted in giving to the thought of man an appropriate vehicle; the jewelers and the goldsmiths of the Byzantines would reveal the fact that even solid gold, inlaid with precious stones, was not considered too costly material for enshrining that most priceless gem of all in the covers they wrought.

Then the master printers of the fifteenth century would tell me how the printing press brought this gem of thought within the reach of others than the wealthy patrons, and of the persistent and courageous efforts they made still to hold the setting true. It would be a lengthy story, for it must cover the history of civilization; but I should find each page more fascinating than a novel. Most guide books are useful only when tucked under my arm as I journey the world over; this one would bring the Kingdom of Books to my

own library, where, on a winter's night, with a cheerful blaze in the fireplace, I could study the monuments at my leisure, and commune with the great characters of their periods in the revealing examples they have left behind.

Again I say, what a volume that would be! Yet, realizing the impossibility of its creation, I myself have found much inspiration in my ever-continuing quest of the perfect book from absorbing what other pilgrims have discovered in their journeys along the same fascinating paths. I have enjoyed comparing their experiences with my own, particularly when these have led to different conclusions. These very differences have helped to fill in the details of a picture which can never be completed, for the Quest can never end. One lover of books can expect only to relay to another the messages which the volumes have conveyed to him, and each message must be quite different in its individual interpretation. The one common, outstanding fact is that the Book is King, and that, since Gutenberg, the Printer has been Prime Minister to an exacting but rewarding monarch.

Let no one think that the post of Prime Minister to the Book has ever been a sinecure. Gutenberg's discovery that letters might be placed together to make words, and words to make sentences, presented new problems for the ministers of mortal princes, and by the same token the Kingdom of Books required able and courageous administrators to guide its destinies throughout its eventful history, involving complicated contemporaneous politics and ecclesiastical



ALDUS MANUTIUS

The tutor who was inspired by the vision of giving the Greek and Latin classics to the world in printed instead of in written form.

(From a Woodcut of the XVI Century published at Rome by Antoine Lafrery. Biblioteca Marciana, Venice.)

history, and portraying every varying characteristic of human nature. Aldus Manutius in Italy in the fifteenth century; Robert Étienne in France and Christophe Plantin in Antwerp in the sixteenth; the Elzevirs in the Netherlands in the seventeenth; John Baskerville in England and the Didots in France in the eighteenth; William Morris, Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker in England in the nineteenth — an honorable list of portfolio holders, who gave a princely account of their stewardship!

There was Aldus Manutius, who helped to put the printed Book upon the throne. He came to Venice about 1488, when printing was in its swaddling clothes, inspired by a wonderful vision. While Nicolas Jenson was producing his splendid volumes in Venice, Aldus had been studying Latin and Greek in Rome and Ferrara, with the ambition of becoming a tutor. Later, he assumed charge of the education of the sons of the Princess of Carpi, a sister of a fellow student, through whom he met many of the learned Greek refugees who freely gave to him of their knowledge. Here, at Carpi, Aldus struggled with the problem of teaching youth the beauties of life by means of the living voice and the *written* word. "What an impetus the learning of the world would receive," thought he, "if the treasured classics of Greece and Rome were made available to a greater number by being in printed form!"

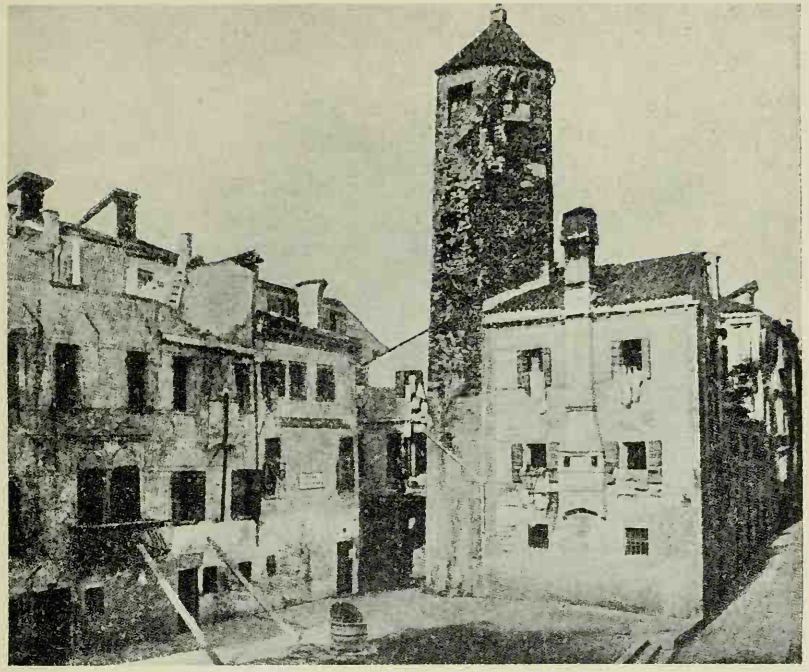
Aldus studied the occasional example of the new art of printing which fell into his hands, and pondered over the difficulties his vision involved: the mechanical knowledge to be mastered, the fonts of type to be

cut, the workmen to be taught, the texts to be secured, the dictionaries and grammars to be written,[1] the facilities to be developed for selling his books. Can you not see the young tutor at Carpi straining at the leash, impatient to translate his dreams into action!

"I have chosen," he declared, "in place of a life of ease and freedom, an anxious and toilsome career." There was no minimizing of the difficulties. He fully recognized the responsibilities of a potential Prime Minister. Strengthened by a modest financial background supplied by the sympathetic Princess of Carpi, he ventured forth upon his quest. Think what he did within that brief span of twenty years! An "anxious and toilsome career" indeed, but full of glorious accomplishment. Type was not to be purchased at the nearest founder's agency — it had to be designed and cut. Aldus secured his Roman font, and added to it small capitals, which no other printer had ever used. Then he invented and cut the Italic letters, basing the design, it is said, upon the cursive, inclined handwriting of Petrarch. Not content with these innovations, he founded the earliest complete fonts of the Greek characters.[2]

Once in Venice, Aldus took up his abode in the old Campo S. Paternian, now the Piazza Manin.[3] The ancient walls stood until about 1880, when the building was torn down to make way for a modern structure; but you may find a tablet on which the historical fact is recorded. Here, under one roof, Aldus was faced

[1] See Plate on p. 17. [2] See Plate at p. 12
[3] See Plate on opp. page.



THE HOUSE OF ALDUS

According to tradition, the house of Aldus in Venice was located in the old Campo S. Paternian (now the Piazza Manin), at the right of the belfry of Saint Paternian. The ancient walls stood until 1880, when the building was torn down to make way for a modern structure, on which a commemorative tablet was placed. It was in this church that the body of Aldus lay in state, surrounded by the books he had printed.

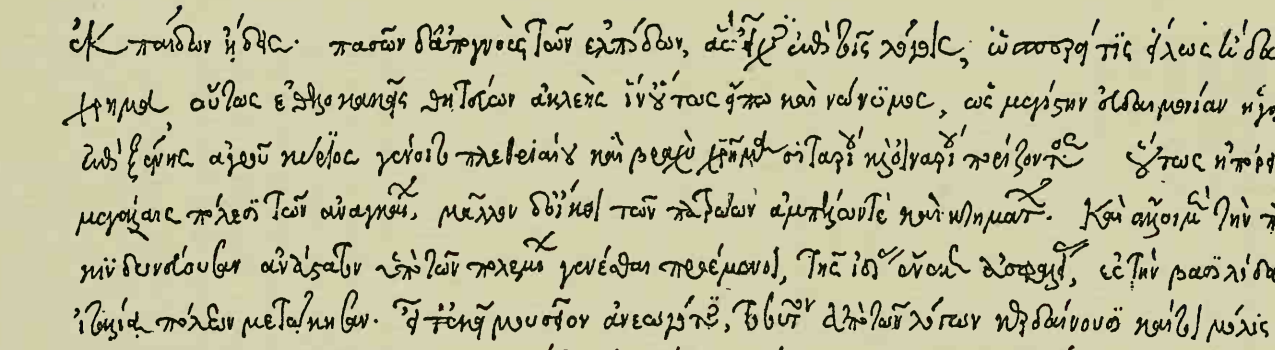
(From a Photograph.)

by the manifold details of raising his family, running his business, and supporting the thirty-three editors, proofreaders, compositors, and pressmen who made up the staff of the Aldine Press. The language of the household was Greek. The compositors were mostly Cretans, chief among whom was Marcus Musurus,[1] from whose handwriting[2] Aldus took the design for his Greek characters. The printing ink was made on the premises, and the splendid paper — "hand work, made of pure linen and hempen rags beaten in pieces by dint of wood and made stiff with glue gotten from boiled hides" — came from the Fabriano mills, which even today supply beautiful sheets for modern books.

Another famous member of Aldus' household was Erasmus,[3] for many years a corrector of the Press. Between him and Musurus there existed ill-concealed antagonism. Aldus was so pressed financially that he set a meager table, and afterwards Erasmus, in one of his *Colloquies*, complained that during that period he had been nearly starved. To this, Musurus retorted that Erasmus drank enough for the triple-bodied Geryon,[4] but did the work of only half a man!

Father Aldus owed a greater debt to Marcus Musurus than merely for coming loyally to his defence, or even for having supplied, through his handwriting, the patterns for the Greek type. Musurus was a scholar no less than Aldus, and his name appears in editorial collaboration with that of the great Manutius. As for the Greek type itself, this was printed in a few books

[1] See Plate on p. 13. [2] See Plate on p. 16. [3] See Plate on p. 19.
[4] The three-headed monster slain by Hercules.



HANDWRITING OF MARCUS MUSURUS

Aldus is said to have based the first complete font of Greek characters ever cut upon the handwriting of his chief compositor, Marcus Musurus, the Cretan. *(From Didot:* Alde Manuce.*)*

during the thirty years which elapsed before Aldus took the world by storm with his *Aristotle* of 1495. Fust and Schoeffer, at Mainz, used it for the titles of each Paradox in their *Paradoxa* of Cicero of 1465, but the compositor made so many errors in handling the unfamiliar characters that he made himself ridiculous; Sweynheym and Pannartz, at Subiaco, printed Greek type in their *Lactantius* of 1465 — more correctly set, but with no capitals, breathings, or accents. Vindelin of Spires and Nicolas Jenson, both at Venice in 1472, used Greek letters with breathings and accents, but with no capitals. Bartolomeo di Libri, in Florence, had printed the first edition of *Homer* in 1488, and during the years 1494–1496 issued a Greek *Anthology*, a few plays by Euripides, and an *Apollonius Rhodius*, composed entirely in capital letters based upon the designs used in the old inscriptions.

The great difficulty in properly handling the Greek language was the lack of Greek and Latin lexicons and grammars. These, of course, had to be written and printed before the editors could prepare the "copy" for the compositors, and before the press correctors could revise the proof after the copy had been put in type. Aldus, with his fonts provided for and his workmen trained, undertook to supply this deficiency. Some years earlier, a Greek refugee, Constantinus Lascaris, had compiled the first lexicon ever attempted,[1] which had been printed in Milan, probably by Dionysius Paravicinus, about 1480. Naturally, this early literary production was hopelessly inadequate, but it supplied

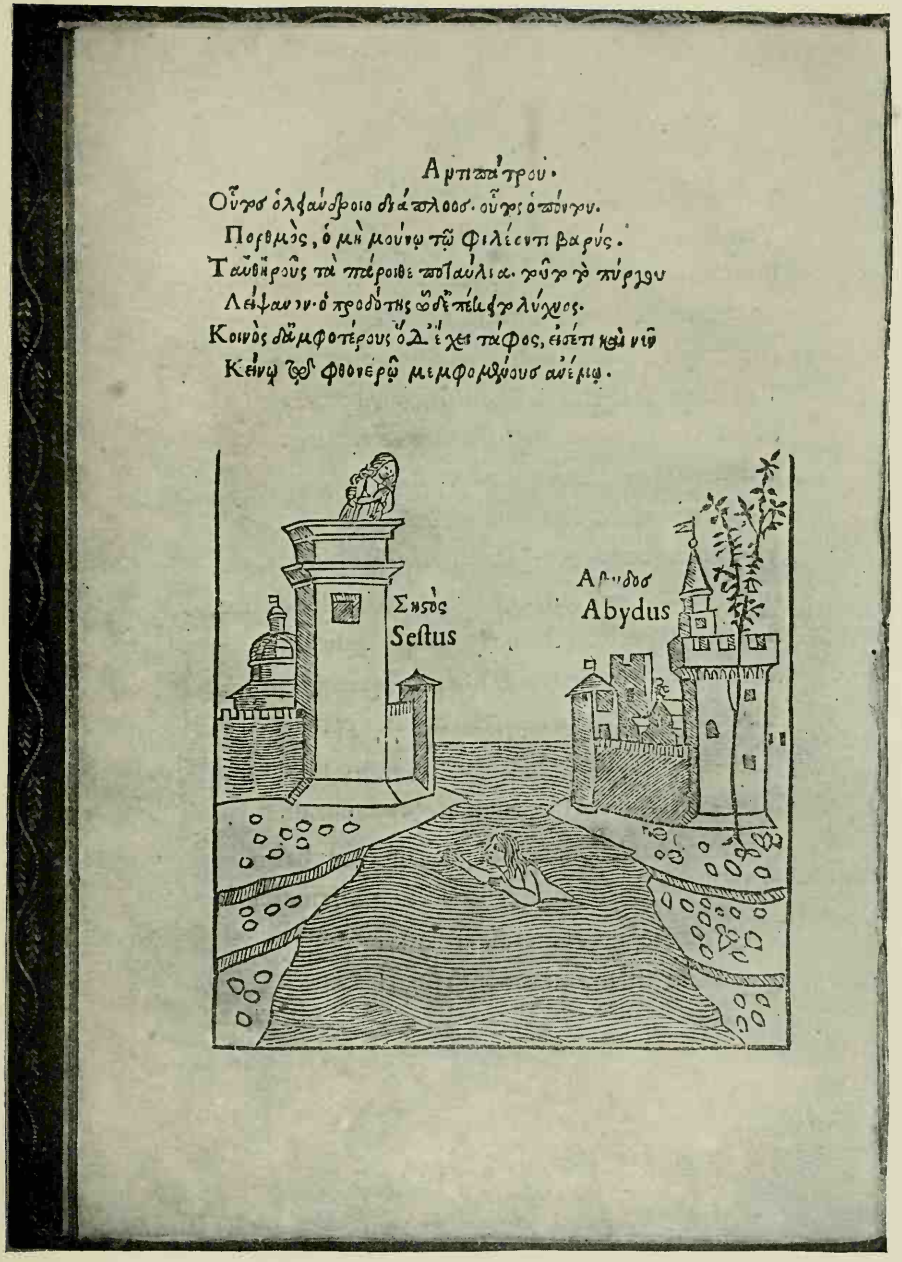
[1] See Plate on p. 17.

an excellent basis for the careful revision which Aldus employed Lascaris to make; and when the new manuscript was completed it became, in 1494, the first issue from the Aldine Press. Then, in the same year, appeared Musaeus' *Opusculum de Herone et Leandro*, his earliest experimental volume with his Greek characters. A year later, he printed a Greek grammar compiled by Theodorus Gaza, and this was followed, within the next two years, by his own Greek and Latin dictionary which he had found time to revise and complete in addition to his other manifold labors.

Thus for five years Aldus had been experimenting while other printers had made use of incorrect copy and imperfect fonts. Then, and not until then, was he ready to issue his great *Aristotle* in four volumes,[1] so nearly like the manuscript text from which he had taught his pupils at Carpi that he could feel the joy of knowing that his dream had come true! This he followed with his *Aristophanes* of 1498. Much as the cursive design of the Aldine Greek has been criticized in later years, its appearance was hailed with enthusiastic approval, and its popularity held for nearly three centuries.

Aldus realized that to compete against the handwritten volume his printed books must represent extraordinary workmanship, and many of his beautiful examples were deemed worthy of being embellished by the art of the illuminator, and encased in the splendid bindings of Grolier. But his heart was still set on issuing those smaller and less magnificent classics!

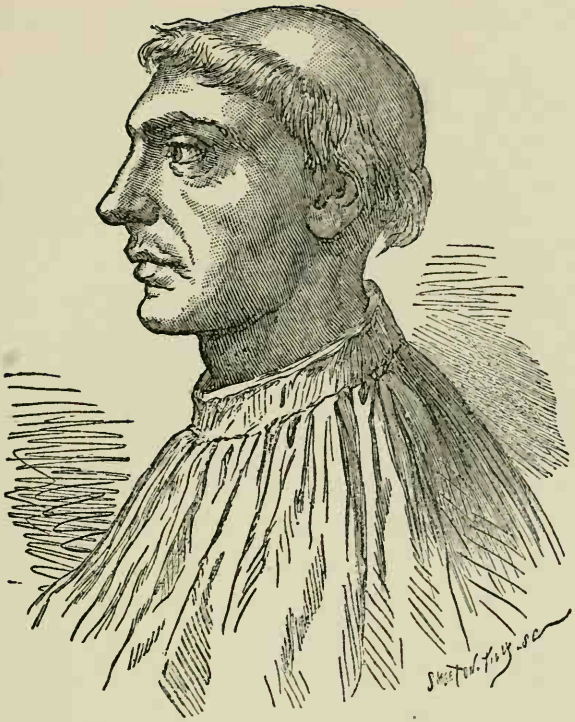
[1] 1495 to 1498.



ALDUS' FIRST GREEK BOOK

Aldus founded the earliest complete fonts of the Greek characters, the design of which was based upon the handwriting of Marcus Musurus, a Cretan, the chief compositor of the Aldine Press. This page is from the first volume in which this new Greek type was used.

(From Musaeus: Opusculum de Herone et Leandro. *Venice*, 1494. *Biblioteca Marciana, Venice.* 6 × 4 *inches.)*



MARCUS MUSURUS

The chief compositor at the Aldine Press, Aldus' loyal friend and collaborator. The first font of Greek type was based on his handwriting. *(After an Engraving by Tobias Stimmer, based on Portrait in Jove:* Virorum Illustrium, 1575.*)*

"I will never desist from my undertaking until I have performed what I have promised," he declared, "always unmindful of expense, however great, and equally regardless of labor, even were I to live in ease and affluence."

So, as the sixteenth century opened, Aldus began his series of Latin and Italian texts in small octavo form, the type page being composed in his famous Italic type, cut for him by Francesco da Bologna, of the celebrated Griffo family. The small, compact form of this design found immediate favor. The *Virgil* of 1501[1] was the first volume printed in the new type, to which were promptly added *Dante* and *Petrarch*, and a long series of Latin and Italian authors. The small octavo series in Greek was inaugurated with the *Sophocles* of 1502. Then came *Thucydides*, *Herodotus*, Xenophon's *Hellenica*, and *Demosthenes*. What a contribution to a world which until then had been wholly dependent upon manuscript volumes for all the classics, except for a few isolated, imperfect editions!

The wide-margin *Plato*,[2] on heavy handmade paper, at two ducats[3] was no extravagance for a wealthy booklover, but the little Aldine *Virgil* — no less perfectly made in smaller *format* on lighter paper at two lire — was even more treasured by the student. There is a difference between them, I must admit! The beautiful copy of the *Plato* which I know so well, at the British Museum, — the only known example with uncut

[1] See Plate at p. 16.

[2] See Plate at p. 18.

[3] The ducat represented about $5.00 in American currency, and the lira 20 cents; but the purchasing power of money in the fifteenth century is estimated at about ten times its present value.

edges, — is the apotheosis of luxury and a joy to fondle. No wonder that the wealthy patrons of that period, accustomed as they were to the magnificent handwritten and illuminated volumes, should resent the inconsistency of a printer who was willing to issue low-cost books when he had proved the power of the press by so splendid an achievement as the *Plato*! What a temptation to curry favor with the high and mighty subjects of King Book, instead of steadfastly insisting, as did Aldus, that the duties of Prime Minister required him also to dress his monarch in less gorgeous but more practical working clothes.

Imagine a publisher today dependent upon personal correspondence for the sale of his volumes! "Nearly every hour," Aldus wrote to Navagerus, "comes a letter from some scholar, and if I undertook to reply to them all I should be obliged to devote day and night to scribbling. I leave many letters unanswered while to others I send brief replies . . . not from pride or discourtesy, but to go on with my task of printing good books." In time, he arranged with agents in the various cities to assist in the distribution. Then came piratical copies of his choicest volumes, made by unscrupulous printers in Paris and Lyons, who carefully refrained from placing on them imprints or dates. The copyright Aldus had secured protected him only within Venetian territory. The devastating wars added to his complications. "For seven years," the harassed printer complained, "books have had to compete with arms." During this period, the universities north of the Alps had to discontinue their classical instruction because

P.V.M. MANTVANI BV
COLICORVM
TITYRVS.

Melibœus. Tityrus.

Me. Ityre tu patulæ recubâs ſub tegmine fagi
Silueſtrem tenui muſam meditaris auena.
Nos patriæ fines, et dulcia linquimus arua,
Nos patriam fugimus, tu Tityre lentus in umbra
Formoſam reſonare doces Amaryllida ſyluas.
Ti. O Melibœe, deus nobis hæc otia fecit.
Nanq; erit ille mihi ſemper deus, illius aram
Sæpe tener noſtris ab ouilibus imbuet agnus.
Ille meas errare boues, ut cernis, et ipſum
Ludere, quæ uellem, calamo permiſit agreſti.
Me. Non equidem inuideo, miror magis, undiq; totis
Vſque adeo turbatur agris. en ipſe capellas
Protinus æger ago, hanc etiam uix Tityre duco.
Hic inter denſas corylos modo nanq; gemellos,
Spem gregis ah ſilice in nuda connixa reliquit.
Sæpe malum hoc nobis, ſi mens non leua fuiſſet,
De cœlo tactas memini prædicere quercus.
Sæpe ſiniſtra caua prædixit ab ilice cornix.
Sed tamen, iſte deus qui ſit, da Tityre nobis.
Ti. Vrbem, quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe putaui
Stulus ego huic noſtræ ſimilem, quo ſæpe ſolemus

THE FIRST ALDINE CLASSIC

The great ambition of Aldus was to issue an edition of the classics at a price within the reach of the poor man, yet no less carefully made than the more expensive volumes. This page is from the Aldine Classics, which sold for two lire.

(From Virgilii Bucolica. *Venice*, 1501. *Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. Exact size.)*

ὠτικὸς · οῦ · ὁ · auricularis.
ὠτίον · ου · τὸ · auricula.
ὠτογλυφὶς · ίδος · ἡ · auriſcalpium.
ὠτώεις · ώεντος · ὁ · aures habens. uel anſas.
ὠυτὸς · pro ὠτὸς · iones dicunt.

ω cum φ

ὠφέλεια · ας · ἡ · utilitas. præda. auxilium.
ὠφελέομαι · μ · ήσομαι · π · ημαι · prædor. habeo utilitatem.
ὤφελες · utinam.
ὠφελέω · μ · ήσω · π · ηκα · iuuo. proſum. act. acti. iung.
ὠφελήσιμος · ου · ὁ · utilis.
ὠφέλιμος · ή

ω cum χ

ὤχρα · ας · ὁ · color qui a pictoribus teritur.
ὠχριάω · μ · άσω · π · ακα · palleo. neu. dat. iung. & abſolute ponitur.
ὦχρος · οῦ · ὁ · pallor.
ὠχρὸς · ου · pallidus.

ὤψ · ὠπὸς · ὁ · uultus. uiſus. frons. oculus.

. . .

ΤΈΛΟϹ ϹΎΝ ΘΕΩ̃ ΤΟΥ̃

ΛΕΞΙΚΟΥ̃ ·

THE FIRST GREEK AND LATIN LEXICON

Without lexicons, the early printers were handicapped in producing accurate classical texts. Aldus found this, the only one in existence, wholly inadequate, and had it revised by Constantinus Lascaris.

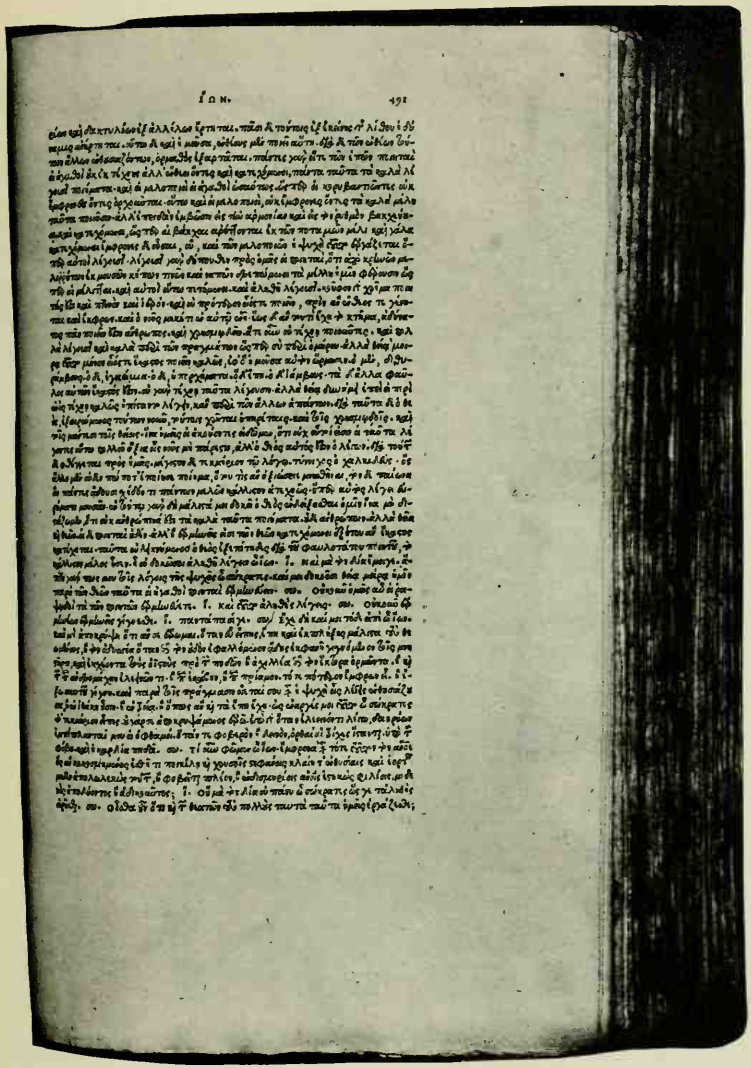
(From Joh. Crastoni: Lexicon graeco-latinum, *printed in Milan about* 1480, *probably by Dionysius Paravicinus. Biblioteca di Brera, Milan. Exact size.)*

soldiers in the passes prevented the Aldine Classics from being transported.

Problems enough, one might say, for any printer to compete against. "My days and nights are devoted to the preparation of material," he writes. "I can scarcely take food or strengthen my stomach owing to the multiplicity and pressure of business. With both hands occupied, and surrounded by pressmen who are clamorous for work, there is scarcely time even to blow my nose!" Twenty years of an "anxious and toilsome career," and then, on February 6, 1515, came the end of earthly service. Aldus died a poor man, estimated by worldly possessions, but what fortune is vast enough to buy the place he now holds in history! And what greater triumph could a Prime Minister to the Book achieve at his death than to lie in state, in the Church of Saint Paternian, in his beloved Venice, surrounded by the volumes he had created — mute but eloquent witnesses of his service to his King? At the end, the great heart turned back to those happy days at Carpi, where his vision had first come to him, and he asked that his mortal remains be laid at rest amidst the scenes of his early labors.

After the death of Aldus Manutius, his father-in-law, Andrea de Torresani, did all in his power to maintain the traditions of the portfolio. Associated with him were his two sons Francesco and Ferderico, and, later, Paulus, the son of Aldus. Thanks to the friendship and generous patronage of Jean Grolier,[1] the Aldine Press ran for some years on the momentum supplied by its

[1] See pp. 189, 191, 195.



ALDUS' WIDE-MARGIN *PLATO*

No wonder that the wealthy patrons resented the inconsistency of a printer who was willing to issue low-cost books when he had proved the power of the press by so splendid an achievement as this *Plato*!

(From Omnia Platonis Opera, *printed in Venice in* 1513. *British Museum.* $12\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ *inches.)*

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

At one time Erasmus was a corrector at the Aldine Press, and when he complained of the meager table set by Aldus, Musurus the Cretan, chief compositor, retorted that he "drank enough for the triple-bodied Geryon, and did the work of only half a man."

(From Dibdin: Decameron.*)*

famous founder; but in the meantime things were happening in France which made it inevitable that King Book should change his capital.

In Paris, Henri Étienne and Simon de Colines had been producing volumes which threatened the supremacy of the Italian press. The taste of the people was

Device of Simon de Colines

changing, and the makers of books began to feel the irresistible demand for greater decoration of the printed page. Working in conjunction with Henri Étienne and Simon de Colines was an extraordinarily gifted young man by the name of Geoffroi Tory.[1] He was an author, a designer, and an engraver. He is referred to also as

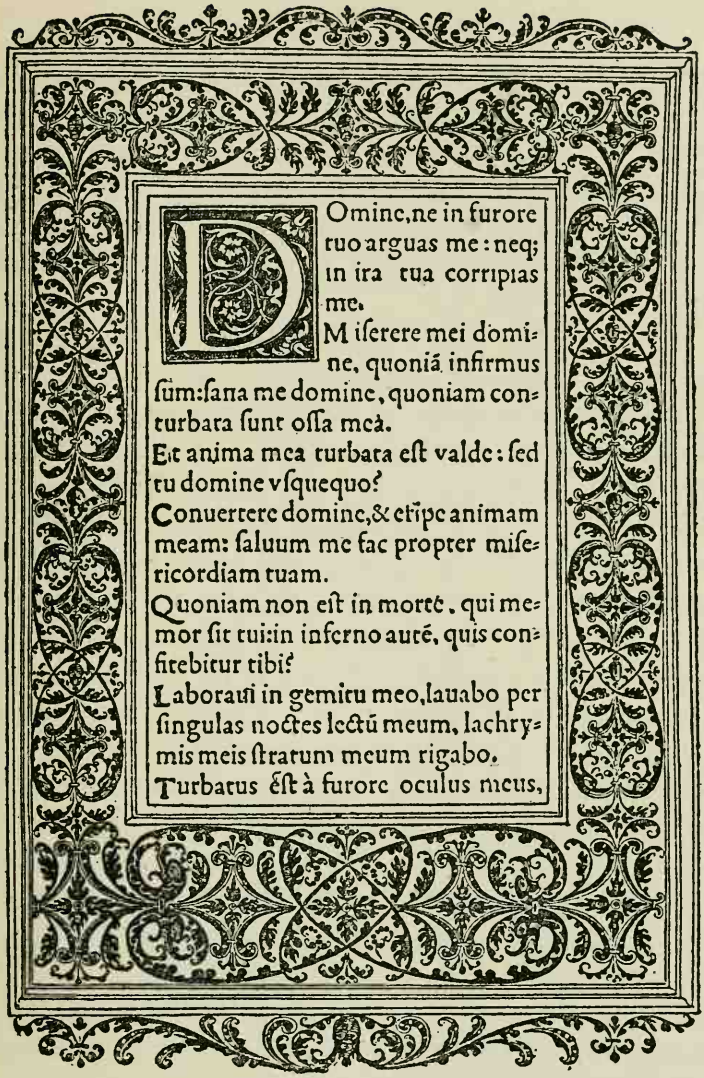
[1] See also page 200.

a printer and a binder, but I believe his relation to the building of books was artistic rather than physical. The interest taken by this young man at this particular time in the history of the Book had an important bearing upon the succeeding prime ministry.

About 1525, Simon de Colines issued a Book of Hours[1] with initial letters and borders by Geoffroi Tory which in spirit and design were entirely different from anything that had been previously produced in France. For the first time a printed book was treated as the product of a distinct art in itself, instead of being considered as a compromise on the handwritten volume. This was exactly what the booklovers of the early sixteenth century were waiting for; and when, in 1529, Tory also proved himself an author of rare charm, the artist designer and engraver found himself famous. This *Champfleury* of Tory's was a curious volume divided into three parts — the first being an appeal to the study of philology; the second, a description of the number, forms, and proportions of letters; and the third — a bit incoherent — is a discussion of the elements of languages.

The importance of this volume was the stimulus it gave in France to the reformation of the old type designing. Until then, the Italian fonts had been slavishly copied, but, with the new interest inspired by Tory's work, a definite attempt was now made to standardize the Roman and the Italic faces, freeing them from some of the defects of the hand letters upon which they were based. Tory's innovation, as suggested in

[1] See Plate on p. 23.



GEOFFROI TORY'S *BOOK OF HOURS*

This volume, issued by Simon de Colines, with initial letters and borders by Geoffroi Tory, was the first instance of a printed book treated as the product of an art distinct in itself. Tory freed the Book from its dependence upon the styles of decoration set by the handwritten volume.

(From the Heures. *Paris*, 1525.*)*

his *Champfleury*, of deriving the shape and proportion of each letter from the symmetry of the human body, was, of course, fantastic, but in effect it produced a revolution in French type design which gave a new distinction to the Roman characters and abolished the use of Gothic. It was Tory who introduced accents in the French types.

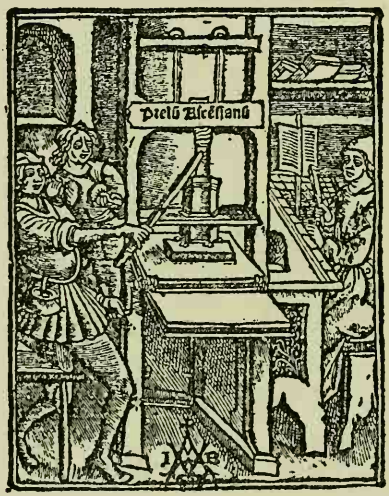
The device of Geoffroi Tory is one of the most famous in the history of the Book. The first use of the *pot cassé* was as a line drawing at the end of a Latin poem written by him upon the death of his little daughter, Agnes. He himself explains its significance in his *Champfleury* — that the broken pitcher is symbolic of our body, which is only a vessel of clay; that the wimble represents Fate, which transfixes both the weak and the strong. The three chains stand for the Three Fates, sealing the Book of Life upon our death, and the flowers in the pitcher are symbols of our virtues. Others see in the design a more intimate story — the broken pitcher standing for a life cut short; the book recalling the literary exercises of little Agnes, which her father directed; the winged figure as symbolic of her soul, and the motto *Non plus* expressing the father's despair over the loss of his beloved daughter. Whatever the significance, Tory placed this mark upon the sheets or the covers of the books he glorified. Thus closely did these early artist craftsmen associate their labors and their loves!

By the time Tory died, in 1533, the decoration of the Book was running riot. No volume was acceptable unless it had portraits, or initial letters, or borders, or

DEVICES OF GEOFFROI TORY

Showing the famous *pot cassé*. This "broken pitcher" first appears as a line drawing at the end of a Latin poem written by Tory upon the death of his little daughter, Agnes. Also note the Lorraine cross.

illustrations. Where all this might have ended except for Robert Étienne, the new Prime Minister to the Book, no one can tell. Robert was firmly grounded in his knowledge of bookmaking by his apprenticeship in the printing office of his father, Henri Étienne, and later through his work with his stepfather, Simon de



Device of Badius, showing Hand Press used in Robert Étienne's Office

Colines. To make it complete, he married the daughter of Jodocus Badius Ascensius, another famous printer. He was in hearty sympathy with Tory's ideas regarding the recutting of the type faces, but his interest in book decoration did not go beyond the headpieces and tailpieces and the initial letters[1] Tory designed. He established himself on his own account when barely twenty-two years of age, and the volumes he produced

[1] See Plate on p. 56.

were so beautiful that in 1539 François I appointed him Royal Printer.

Robert Étienne's various printing establishments, in Paris and Geneva, never exceeded five or six fonts of Roman and Italic type, with several cases of ornaments engraved on wood; four hand presses; and from fifteen to twenty editors, compositors, and pressmen. Yet, during the thirty-four years of his service to the Book, he averaged sixteen volumes a year — a tremendous output when the nature and quality of his publications are taken into account. No wonder that Robert had to neglect his personal and domestic affairs! "Without divine assistance," he wrote, "I should have succumbed under the strain." Like Aldus, Étienne maintained his associates, and the language of his house was Latin, while that of the Venetian establishment had been Greek.

It has not been the custom to associate printers with Royal functions, but Robert Étienne, in his new capacity of Prime Minister to the Book, was no less a credit to his monarch than was Benvenuto Cellini. Both were artists, and added luster to the French Court. François was eager to secure for himself through letters the prestige which had been the glory of the Italian princes, and out of the liberal support given to the recutting of the old types came the glorious Royal Greeks, than which nothing more beautiful of their kind has ever been seen. Yet, curiously enough, Robert leaned toward Latin more than toward Greek, and demonstrated his scholarship by preparing a Latin dictionary which remained the standard for two centuries.

The responsibility of the Étienne prime ministry, then, was to maintain, to improve, and to carry on rather than to create, and this Robert did in spite of tremendous difficulties. There was no need for him to concern himself with the preparation of Greek lexicons

Device of Robert Étienne

or grammars, there was no trouble in securing accurate "copy" for the classics — the work of Aldus had provided these basic necessities; but new dangers threatened King Book. Until now, the demand for books had come mostly from the ecclesiastics and the universities, but when the Reformation broke loose

non enim temere, nec fortuito sati, & creati sumus: sed profecto fuit quædã uis, quæ generi consuleret humano: nec id gigneret, aut aleret, quod, cum exclauisset omnes labores, tum incideret in mortis malum sempiternum: portum potius paratum nobis, & perfugium putemus. quo utinam uelis passis peruehi liceat. sin reflantibus uentis reijciemur, tamen eodem paulo tardius referamur neæsse est. quod autẽ omnibus neæsse est, idne miserum esse uni potest? habes epilogum, ne quid prætermissum, aut relictum putes. A. *Ego uero. & quidem fecit etiam iste me epilogus firmiorem.* M. *Optime, inquam. Sed nunc quidem ualetudini tribuamus aliquid: cras autem, & quot dies erimus in Tusculano, agamus hæc, & ea potissimum, quæ leuationem habeant ægritudinum, formidinum, cupiditatum: qui omni è philosophia est fructus uberrimus.*

M. TVLLII CICERONIS TVSCVLANARVM QVAESTIONVM LIBER SECVNDVS, DE TOLERANDO DOLORE.

NEOPTOLEMVS *quidem apud Ennium philosophari sibi ait neæsse esse, sed paucis: nã omnino haud placere. Ego autem Brutæ neæsse quidem mihi esse arbitror philosophari: nam quid possum præsertim nihil agens agere melius? sed non paucis, ut ille: difficile enim est in philosophia pau*

ÉTIENNE'S SMALL OCTAVO *CICERO*

Étienne had the same desire as Aldus to produce low-cost volumes, well made, at a price the lean purse could pay. Here the Italic type is based upon the Aldine characters, but is recut as the result of Tory's influence.

(From M. Tullii Ciceronis Opera. *Paris*, 1543. *British Museum.* $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4$ *inches.)*

the people realized that they must turn to the printed book to learn what it was all about. This would seem to be a wonderful opportunity for the printer, but together with the demand from the people came an awakening on the part of the Church that if the masses were going to read, the subject matter of books must be made to conform with the teachings of the monks.

Étienne and Aldus were the greatest scholars (unless we include William Morris) who ever served as Prime Ministers to the Book, and it was this scholarship that led the Frenchman into trouble. After having Grandjon cut the Royal Greeks, Étienne undertook to edit the texts to make them conform in accuracy with the beauty of the type. It was he who first subdivided the chapters of the New Testament into verses (doing much of this labor, it is said, while riding on horseback between Paris and Lyons), and wherever he found obvious errors in the text, he corrected them. These were liberties the ecclesiastical censors could not tolerate. They were already quite suspicious of the Greek language because few of them could read it, and as for Latin, the Church felt the responsibility of directing the nature of the reading placed before the people by the printing press. That this censorship was oppressive, and that it retarded the advance of learning, cannot be disputed, but even the most partisan must admit that it was a natural defensive reaction.

Two distinctive editions disclose Robert Étienne's ambitions — the four-volume quarto *Cicero*[1] of 1538, printed in the recut Roman type based upon Italian

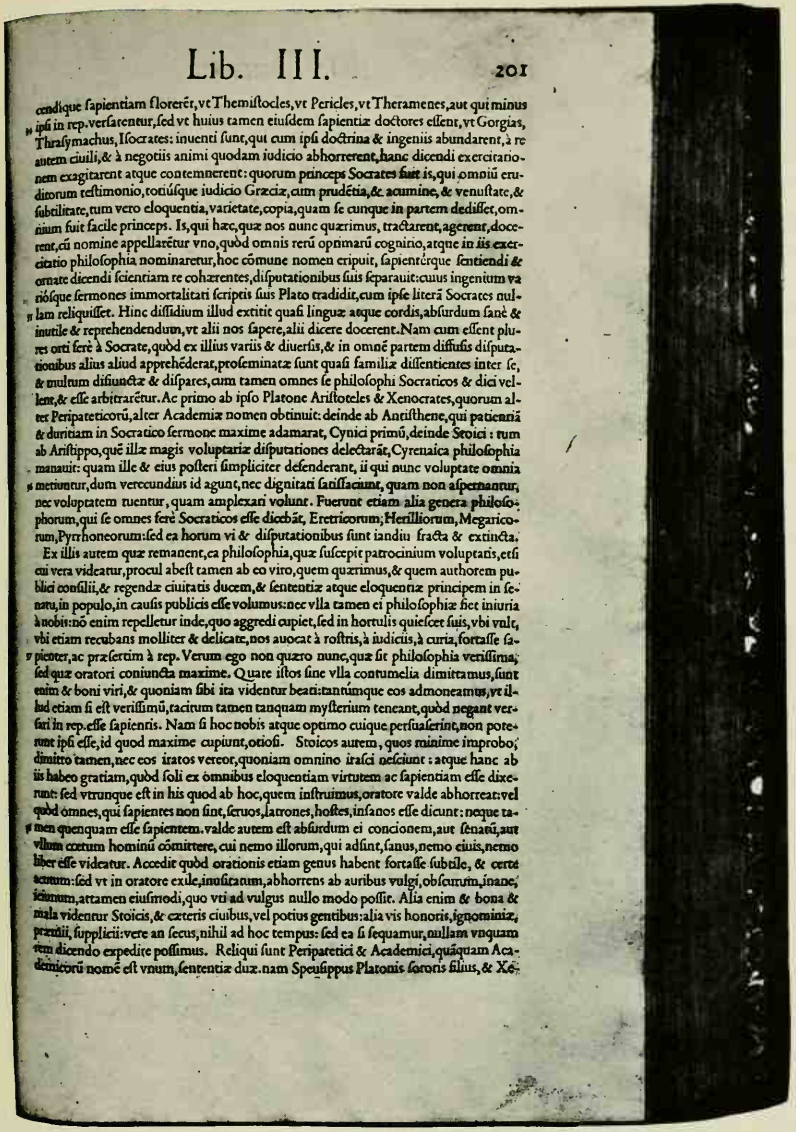
[1] See Plate at p. 30.

models, with a running head in large, lower-case letters instead of the Aldine small capitals; and the same material issued in eight small volumes[1] in 1543, with Italic type based upon the Aldine characters. The magnificent books printed in the Royal Greeks, and the quartos in Roman type, were for those who could afford the luxury of expensive volumes; the smaller editions, like the classics of Aldus, were well made but at a price which the lean purse could pay.

While François lived Étienne was protected from the censors, but when Henri II ascended the French throne the printer realized that even his life was in actual danger. As early as 1546, when the publisher Dolet was hanged and then burned, together with his heretical volumes, in the Place Maubert, in Paris, Robert began to make plans to leave the country. Not even the punning epigram Dolet is reported to have uttered at the gallows, *Non dolet ipse Dolet, sed pia turba dolet*,[2] could restrain him. Yet it was six years before he actually succeeded in making his escape to Geneva. I wonder what his feelings must have been, when, after deserting Paris because of what he considered Catholic persecution, he saw the Catholic Servetus burned at the stake in Geneva by order of the Protestant John Calvin! Every copy of the offending *Christianismi Restitutio* was supposed to have been burned with Servetus, but in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris is the very copy containing the annotations of Calladon, his accuser, saved from the fire, but with its edges burnt by the

[1] See Plate at p. 28.

[2] "It is not Dolet himself who grieves, but the pious crowd."



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cendique ſapientiam floreréť, vt Themiſtocles, vt Pericles, vt Theramenes, aut qui minus ipſi in rep. verſarentur, ſed vt huius tamen eiuſdem ſapientiæ doctores eſſent, vt Gorgias, Thraſymachus, Iſocrates: inuenti ſunt, qui cum ipſi doctrina & ingeniis abundarent, à re autem ciuili, & à negotiis animi quodam iudicio abhorrerent, hanc dicendi exercitationem exagitarent atque contemnerent: quorum princeps Socrates fuit is, qui omniũ eruditorum teſtimonio, totiúſque iudicio Græciæ, cum prudẽtia, & acumine, & venuſtate, & ſubtilitate, tum vero eloquentia, varietate, copia, quam ſe cunque in partem dediſſet, omnium fuit facile princeps. Is, qui hæc, quæ nos nunc quærimus, tractarent, agerent, docerent, cũ nomine appellarẽtur vno, quòd omnis rerũ opinmarũ cognitio, atque in iis exercitatio philoſophia nominaretur, hoc cõmune nomen eripuit, ſapientérque ſentiendi & ornate dicendi ſcientiam re cohærentes, diſputationibus ſuis ſeparauit: cuius ingenium vatióſque ſermones immortalitati ſcriptis ſuis Plato tradidit, cum ipſe literã Socrates nullam reliquiſſet. Hinc diſſidium illud extitit quaſi linguæ atque cordis, abſurdum ſanè & inutile & reprehendendum, vt alii nos ſapere, alii dicere docerent. Nam cum eſſent plures orti ferè à Socrate, quòd ex illius variis & diuerſis, & in omnẽ partem diffuſis diſputationibus alius aliud apprehẽderat, proſeminatæ ſunt quaſi familiæ diſſentientes inter ſe, & multum diſiunctæ & diſpares, cum tamen omnes ſe philoſophi Socraticos & dici vellent, & eſſe arbitrarẽtur. Ac primo ab ipſo Platone Ariſtoteles & Xenocrates, quorum alter Peripateticorũ, alter Academiæ nomen obtinuit: deinde ab Antiſthene, qui patientiã & duritiam in Socratico ſermone maxime adamarat, Cynici primũ, deinde Stoici: tum ab Ariſtippo, quẽ illæ magis voluptariæ diſputationes delectarãt, Cyrenaica philoſophia manauit: quam ille & eius poſteri ſimpliciter defenderant, ii qui nunc voluptate omnia metiuntur, dum verecundius id agunt, nec dignitati ſatisfaciunt, quam non aſpernantur, nec voluptatem tuentur, quam amplexari volunt. Fuerunt etiam alia genera philoſophorum, qui ſe omnes ferè Socraticos eſſe dicebãt, Eretricorum, Herilliorum, Megaricorum, Pyrrhonеorum: ſed ea horum vi & diſputationibus ſunt iandiu fracta & extincta.

Ex illis autem quæ remanent, ea philoſophia, quæ ſuſcepit patrocinium voluptatis, etſi cui vera videatur, procul abeſt tamen ab eo viro, quem quærimus, & quem authorem publici conſilii, & regendæ ciuitatis ducem, & ſententiæ atque eloquentiæ principem in ſenatu, in populo, in cauſis publicis eſſe volumus: nec vlla tamen ei philoſophiæ fiet iniuria à nobis: nõ enim repelletur inde, quo aggredi cupiet, ſed in hortulis quieſcet ſuis, vbi vult, vbi etiam recubans molliter & delicate, nos auocat à roſtris, à iudiciis, à curia, fortaſſe ſapienter, ac præſertim à rep. Verum ego non quæro nunc, quæ ſit philoſophia veriſſima, ſed quæ oratori coniuncta maxime. Quare iſtos ſine vlla contumelia dimittamus, ſunt enim & boni viri, & quoniam ſibi ita videntur beati: tantúmque eos admoneamus, vt illud etiam ſi eſt veriſſimũ, tacitum tamen tanquam myſterium teneant, quòd negant verſari in rep. eſſe ſapientis. Nam ſi hoc nobis atque optimo cuique perſuaſerint, non poterunt ipſi eſſe, id quod maxime cupiunt, otioſi. Stoicos autem, quos minime improbo, dimitto tamen, nec eos iratos vereor, quoniam omnino iraſci neſciunt: atque hanc ab iis habeo gratiam, quòd ſoli ex omnibus eloquentiam virtutem ac ſapientiam eſſe dixerunt: ſed vtrunque eſt in his quod ab hoc, quem inſtruimus, oratore valde abhorreat: vel quòd omnes, qui ſapientes non ſint, ſeruos, latrones, hoſtes, inſanos eſſe dicunt: neque tamen quenquam eſſe ſapientem. valde autem eſt abſurdum ei concionem, aut ſenatũ, aut vllum cœtum hominũ cõmittere, cui nemo illorum, qui adſint, ſanus, nemo ciuis, nemo liber eſſe videatur. Accedit quòd orationis etiam genus habent fortaſſe ſubtile, & certe acutum: ſed vt in oratore exile, inuſitatum, abhorrens ab auribus vulgi, obſcurum, inane, ieiunum, attamen eiuſmodi, quo vti ad vulgus nullo modo poſſit. Alia enim & bona & mala videntur Stoicis, & exteris ciuibus, vel potius gentibus: alia vis honoris, ignominiæ, præmii, ſupplicii: vere an ſecus, nihil ad hoc tempus: ſed ea ſi ſequamur, nullam vnquam rem dicendo expedire poſſimus. Reliqui ſunt Peripatetici & Academici, quãquam Academicorũ nomẽ eſt vnum, ſententiæ duæ. nam Speuſippus Platonis ſororis filius, & Xe-

ÉTIENNE'S QUARTO *CICERO*

This beautiful edition is printed in the Roman type, recut as a result of Tory's influence, but still based upon Italian models, with running head in large, lower-case letters instead of the Aldine small capitals.

(From M. Tullii Ciceronis Opera. *Paris*, 1538.
British Museum. $14\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ *inches.)*

flames. No religion has ever held a monopoly on the control of human passions!

For half a century after Robert Étienne there was little competition for the position of Prime Minister. The portfolio was classified among hazardous risks! Then Christophe Plantin[1] came under the sway of the beguiling King Book, and offered his devoted service, but with a polite suggestion that the Court should be located in Antwerp instead of in Paris. This was not altogether because he felt that here he stood more chance of keeping his head. The Plantin books recall to us that by the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp had outstripped Paris or even London as the leading commercial city in the world. Failing to foresee the disasters which were to fall upon himself and upon the city of his choice from the "Spanish Fury," Plantin undertook to emulate the achievements of Aldus and Étienne, and to build upon the basis they had already established. The Roman, Italic, and Greek types of his predecessors were minutely studied, revised, and recut; he surrounded himself with learned authors and editors, chief among whom was the famous Lipsius; and so scrupulous was he in the matter of accuracy that he displayed his proof sheets in front of his printing office, offering rewards for the detection of errors in the typography of the text.

Plantin was at heart as capable a builder of books as Aldus or Étienne, but conditions had changed. He made his great artistic gesture with his *Biblia Polyglotta*, and when that proved a dismal financial failure,

[1] See also Chapter VII.

he gathered up the pieces and changed his course to meet the demands of his time. Readers all over the world had so increased in number as to form a veritable army, and in addition to the Latin or Greek, in which nearly all the earlier volumes were printed, there now came a demand for books in the vulgar tongues.

One of Plantin's oldest Printers' Marks, cut in Wood by Arnold Nicolaï

Money was a scarce commodity. Plantin saw at once that he must cut his garment according to his cloth, so he capitulated by becoming a liberal artist and produced low-cost books instead of the *de luxe* volumes he had shown himself so well able to build. By doing this he proved himself an astute statesman, fully competent to guide the affairs of the Kingdom of Books along the only line that could then be followed.

A CHOICE

OF EMBLEMES,

AND OTHER DEVISES,

For the moſte parte gathered out of ſundrie writers,
Engliſhed and Moralized.

AND DIVERS NEWLY DEVISED,
by Geffrey Whitney.

A worke adorned with varietie of matter, both pleaſant and profitable: wherein thoſe that pleaſe, maye finde to fit their fancies: Bicauſe herein, by the office of the eie, and the eare, the minde maye reape dooble delighte throughe holſome preceptes, ſhadowed with pleaſant deuiſes: both fit for the vertuous, to their incoraging: and for the wicked, for their admoniſhing and amendment.

To the Reader.

Peruſe with heede, then frendlie iudge, and blaming raſhe refraine:
So maiſt thou reade vnto thy good, and ſhalt requite my paine.

Imprinted at LEYDEN,
In the houſe of Chriſtopher Plantyn,
by Francis Raphelengius.
M. D. LXXXVI.

A PLANTIN VOLUME IN ENGLISH

The Plantin Press, instead of restricting itself to Latin and Greek, as did most of the other Presses, issued volumes in almost every language. This is one of the few printed in English. Note the curious division of words. It was printed in Christophe Plantin's branch office in Leyden, where he took refuge during the " Spanish Fury " in Antwerp.

In 1566 the catalogue of the Plantin Press included volumes in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Flemish, Dutch, and English,[1] and Plantin's correctors' room was filled with accomplished linguists and scholars. Well-organized agencies for the sale of his books were to be found at every strategic point, and the business of books began to be established. Thus far, however, the influence of the master printers who preceded still preserved the quality of workmanship. The Plantin volumes could not compare, as a whole, with those of Aldus or Étienne, yet they were so far superior to what other printers of the period could produce that they excited universal admiration. "From this very office," wrote Dibdin, even as late as 1815, "such a succession of beautiful, curious, useful, and magnificent works issued as filled Europe with astonishment, and raised the name of Plantin to the topmost pitch of glory." Another enthusiastic writer compared the Plantin office to " the belly of the Trojan horse — from which more heroes (in the shape of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin books) had issued than came Grecian warriors from the horse of Troy."

Then came the decline in the portfolio of Prime Minister to the Book. All through the seventeenth century was heard the demand (too familiar, alas! in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well!) for cheap books — not low-cost, but *cheap*. Aldus and Étienne and Plantin had made low-cost volumes, but never a cheap one. Paper makers in Switzerland now catered to public demand by offering a product made of inferior

[1] See Plate on p. 33.

rags or substituted fiber. Even the better grades of paper had a hard, uneven surface, on which the type, worn by constant use, appeared in broken, irregular blocks. I like to call attention to this period when, after expending infinite pains upon the typography of a volume, a publisher protests over the slightly extra expense of a quality of paper which is necessary to preserve the harmony. I have even been tempted to refer him to what the Reverend Cracherode — whose vol-

Device of Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevir

umes are now among the most highly prized treasures in the British Museum — used to say regarding the leaves of a book: "How they talk to you! How they invite you, by such 'small talk,' to turn them over and to read what is impressed upon them!"

And the paper was not the only degradation of the seventeenth-century book. Makers of ink had discovered new and less expensive materials, which resulted in a grey page as against the beautiful black of the earlier period. No longer were printers invited to set themselves up in monasteries, as at Subiaco; or in palaces, as at Rome; or in colleges, as at Paris. Instead

of supporting the art of printing, both Church and State now openly opposed it. The scholar printer disappeared, and the publisher printer, who considered the publishing first and the printing as of secondary importance, entered the picture.

About 1625, after a long vacancy, Bonaventura Elzevir and his nephew Abraham jointly assumed the rôle of Prime Minister to the Book, in Leyden. Louis Elzevir, the founder of this famous family, opened a bookshop in Leyden in 1580, and when Christophe Plantin opened his Leyden branch, this Elzevir was placed in charge. Louis Elzevir was an excellent bookseller, a very ordinary publisher, and no printer at all. This was why Plantin placed the office in the hands of Franciscus Raphelengius instead of Elzevir when he returned to Antwerp after peace was restored in that unhappy city. Bonaventura was Louis Elzevir's son, and Abraham was his grandson. These Elzevirs were ambitious to rescue the making of books from the low point to which it had descended, and in their *Cæsar*, *Terence*, and *Pliny* of 1634–1636 they demonstrated their worthiness to lay claim to the portfolio. Their editions were correct and exhibited much taste in typographical arrangement. The new Prime Ministers showed ingenuity in introducing a novel and smaller *format*, and versatility in combining copper-plate titles of superior merit with the types. Their *régime* was received by the booklovers of the period with protestations of joy and approval, which are easily explained by the comparative inferiority of the production of contemporary makers of books.

Booklovers still caress their Elzevir examples, and poets have sung their praises, but it is difficult to understand just why or how these volumes hold their excessive reputation. Compared with the books that immediately preceded them, the Elzevir engraved title pages, attractive headpieces and tailpieces, and well composed though monotonous type pages were infinitely superior; but in most of the volumes any sense of real beauty created by the typography was destroyed by the inferior paper and the poor ink. Many of the high prices recorded for "Elzevirs" have been tributes to the splendid bindings of this period, in which enthusiastic booklovers enclosed printed text of really inferior quality.

Personally, I have always held a grudge against the Elzevirs because, after demonstrating how much they knew of fine bookmaking, they did not preserve a better average. It was high time that the Prime Minister of the Book should reorganize the affairs of the Minister of the Interior, and put the Kingdom upon a common-sense business basis — but it does seem as if this might have been accomplished without encouraging the makers of imitation paper and counterfeit ink.

From the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the nineteenth only two Prime Ministers exercised their proper functions — John Baskerville, in Birmingham, England, about 1750, and the Didots in Paris about 1800. The Englishman is the more extraordinary figure, because he emerged without advance heralding, and, apparently without previous experience, he designed and cut types which rivaled

1 *AD LECTOREM.*

CLericus es? legito hæc. Laicus? legito ista libenter.
Crede mihi, invenies hic quod uterque voles.

D. Di Tr. Med.

2 *Ad D. Ioannem Audoënum, de libro.*

QVo minus edatur, nihil impedit: aut ego catmen
Non sapio; aut ætas, si sapit, ista leget.
Ingenii tu rere tui tantum esse periclum:
Iudicii tamen est alea jacta mei.

Ioann. Hoskins. I. Consultus.

3 *Ad Ioannem Audoenum, de tribus Epigrammatum libellis.*

QVicquid habent Veneres Venerum, Chariteſque leporum;
Quicquid Musa ioci, quicquid Apollo salis;
Quodcunque est Sophiæ, quodcunque est artis ubique,
Ingenii aut Genii quicquid ubique viget;
Omne id, Oene, tuis reor insedisse libellis,
Hæc quando nobis leminata dia dabas.

Ioann. Bovvman. Theol.

4 *Ad Ioan. Audoënum.*

QVale rogas nobis, Odoene, Epigramma probetur?
Dicam: Quale tuum parturit ingenium.
Quod breve, quod castum, doctum, celere atque politum,
Quodque habeat multos, & sine dente, sales.
Hoc tua Musa dabit, Genius promittit, & ultra
Confirmat Dominæ meutio prima ruæ.

Tuus Gulielmus Iames, Theol.

A 5 In

ELZEVIR TYPOGRAPHY

This is a charming example of the best Elzevir typography. The text, consisting of short paragraphs, offers a real test of the typographer's skill, which has here been abundantly demonstrated. The copper-plate illustration combines perfectly with the type and the textual decorations *(See page 100).* *(Joan. Owenus:* Epigrammatum. *Louis Elzevir, Amsterdam, 1647. Found by the Author on a Stall on the Quai Voltaire, Paris. Exact size.)*

IL LIBRO DEL CORTEGIANO DEL CONTE BALDESAR CASTIGLIONE.

Haſſi nel priuilegio, & nella gratia ottenuta dalla Illuſtriſſima Signoria che in queſta, ne in niun'altra Citta del ſuo dominio ſi poſſa imprimere, ne altroue impreſſo uendere queſto libro del Cortegiano per·x· anni ſotto le pene in eſſo contenute.

ONE OF THE BEST ALDINE TITLES

Well balanced and effectively handled, especially when the amount of lettering is considered.

(Printed by the Aldi, Venice, 1528. 8 × 5 *inches.)*

PUBLII VIRGILII

MARONIS

BUCOLICA,

GEORGICA,

ET

AENEIS.

BIRMINGHAMIAE:

Typis JOHANNIS BASKERVILLE.

MDCCLVII.

THE BEST TITLE PAGE SINCE THE ALDINE PRESS

Baskerville was the first printer who properly visualized a title page. The type is spread all over the page, but the number of words is reduced to the minimum.

(Reduced from $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.*)*

Caslon's famous fonts. He then produced volumes, beginning with the *Virgil* of 1757, that still rank with the outstanding typographic masterpieces of the world.

John Baskerville was a character in Birmingham long before he so unexpectedly assumed the portfolio of Prime Minister of the Book. His personal eccentricities enraged his neighbors to such an extent that it is difficult to obtain a fair estimate of his real personality. The town first knew him as a servant in the family of a clergyman; then he taught the art of writing in King Edward's School — in the little churchyard at Edgbaston the sexton will still show you two slate slabs on which the inscriptions were cut by "John Baskerville, Writing Master."

The writing master grew ambitious, and in due time succeeded in establishing himself in the japanning business, from which he achieved a fortune. Proud of his success, he dressed himself in green coat and trousers, with narrow, gold-lace edging, a scarlet waistcoat covered with gold lace, and a small, round hat similarly decorated. Thus appareled, he drove about in a gorgeous equipage, emblazoned with panels containing decorations of flowers and naked cupids, and drawn by two magnificent cream-colored horses. Here, surely, was a Prime Minister with an appreciation of the dramatic — or was he simply taking revenge on his past!

This was the man who produced the first finely made book in England! The royal quarto *Virgil* of 1757, his very first volume, has the best title page[1] of any book issued since the Aldine press.[2] Following the custom

[1] See Plate on p. 41.

[2] See Plate on p. 40.

of the time, the type is spread all over the page, but at least Baskerville reduced the number of words to the minimum. The book is thoughtfully composed in type of Baskerville's own design; it is printed in the most beautiful and brilliant purple-black ink ever seen, — made by his own formula, — on a hand press of his own manufacture. The paper was also made by him, from waste silk. This was the first time paper had ever been given a smooth, polished surface — accomplished by pressing the sheets between heated japanned plates of his own invention and manufacture. John Baskerville may have been vainglorious, but somehow, from some source, he acquired the sense of visualizing the Book as a whole, and succeeded in contributing to it original elements which made his prime ministry constructive. He may have had a disagreeable disposition, but at least he possessed that "something" which found permanent expression in his volumes, gained for him the contemporary friendship and admiration of Benjamin Franklin and Macaulay, and the appreciation of booklovers for all time.

CHAPTER II

Modern Masters of Typography

II

MODERN MASTERS OF TYPOGRAPHY

IN passing through the crowded thoroughfares of life I sometimes jostle against some one who forces the unspoken thought into my mind, "There is a man I want to know." I make no effort to analyze the impression. If I were to ask myself I could not tell whether I was attracted by the expression on the man's face, by his bearing, by the frankness of his eyes as they met mine, or by the tone of his voice. I make no effort to analyze because I recognize that there is no occasion for analysis. The fact remains that the man possesses a something which attracted me in that single moment of our meeting, and I know that something to be intangible.

I sometimes read a book in which the characters step out from the printed pages and stand beside me as living friends. I have turned to the title page to see the name of the writer who could create such personalities, and said to myself, "There is a man I want to know." I might not be able to explain to another why this book appealed to me more than did the other ninety-nine I had read, but I do know that in it was that something which struck a responsive echo in my own heart.

When, many years ago, the knowledge first came to me that type could be made the medium to express the personality of a man, a wonderful new vista of life

opened up before me. I had learned from my professors that by means of a brush and pigments an artist could translate himself upon the surface of canvas; that with a chisel the sculptor could change a rough block of marble into a living, breathing figure; that a composer could make dots upon a sheet of paper to guide a musician in drawing his bow across a manufactured box of wood and catgut strings, in such a way as to force tears or laughter from those who listened; but that a man could put types on end in such a way as to create in me a desire to feel the inspiration of his personality — that was for me to learn for myself.

This is what suggested the idea of placing the administrations of the various Prime Ministers of the Book side by side, that I might study them. I found that in every case their objective was the same: they all sought to give beauty and permanence to the human thought; they all contended against definite obstacles; they all contributed to the glory of the Book — yet each had to approach it from a different angle. I felt impelled to seek the characteristics and the ideals which made certain men Prime Ministers while thousands of others who devoted their lives to the service of the same King failed to leave even their names behind. What is there in the physical make-up of one printed book which creates in me a desire to caress it, while another fails even to attract a second thought?

I have found it fascinating to discover, through increasing intimacy with a book, hitherto unfamiliar expressions of the maker's personality as conveyed by means of this revealing medium, for the Book is, on

its physical side, as Dr. Harry Lyman Koopman so well puts it, a highly organized art object. "Not in vain," this booklover continues, "has it transmitted the thought and passion of the ages; it has taken toll of them, and in the hands of its worthiest makers these elements have worked themselves out into its material body. It has, therefore, the qualities of a true art product, and stands second only to those (such as painting and sculpture) which express the artist's thought instead of enshrining it; but no other art product of its own order, not the violin nor the jewel casket, can compare with the Book in esthetic quality. It meets one of the highest tests of art, for it appeals to the sense of both beauty and grandeur."

Before crossing the border line which separates the old-time printers from the modern, I like to pause long enough to contemplate the high lights of the various prime ministries, and to fix in my mind the relation which each bears toward those who went before, and what each contributed to his successors. Aldus had the advantage of the basic principles supplied by Gutenberg and the practical application by Jenson, but still I like to give him credit for being the pioneer. It is much to invent the combination of movable types in expressing the thought of man, it is much to devise the finest font of Roman type; but how far would this have carried the art of printing without the dictionaries and grammars of Aldus, or without his practical insistence that the book could be printed instead of hand-lettered and still be held beautiful?

Robert Étienne contributed a Latin dictionary, which supplemented the Greek lexicons of Aldus. He gave the world the most beautiful Greek characters ever seen; but they could scarcely have come into being except for the font Aldus had cut before him. Étienne appropriated the Italic Aldus had earlier designed, and made use of some of his texts, but in doing this there was no slavish copying. The Frenchman absorbed and then gave out the assimilated knowledge made richer by his personal interpretation. And he risked his life in defending the high ideals of his portfolio.

Christophe Plantin made use of everything that had gone before, yet added much to the spiritual and temporal welfare of King Book. He modified Étienne's magnificent Royal Greeks enough to make them more practical for the typesetter; he applied the art of printing to works in the vulgar tongues, and thus widely enlarged its horizon; he introduced business principles which ensured permanence to the Book. He standardized processes, and by establishing so permanent a dynasty, prevented the old ideals from ever being lost.

The Elzevirs founded the present business of publishing, as separated from printing. They contributed little to the mechanical advancement of the Book or to its physical quality, but by their publishing ingenuity they stimulated a new and world-wide interest. Volumes to achieve their purpose must be read, and to be read must be distributed. The Elzevirs, profiting by Plantin's earlier efforts, contributed the organization which made book sales possible.

Baskerville added much of permanent value in giving

out again what he had absorbed from his predecessors. I give him credit for being the first printer who properly visualized a title page. Some of the later Aldine titles were comparatively good, but from the time title pages first came into use there was a universal tendency to overload them with too many lines of type, and with inharmonious decoration. Baskerville reduced the amount of matter to the minimum, and in doing this he set a model for all time to come. Baskerville also gave a new quality to printer's ink, and demonstrated how brilliant well-cut type appears when well printed on a surfaced paper.

The Didots were printing books in France while Baskerville was at the peak of his fame, but it was not until the fourth generation that the brothers Pierre *l'âiné* and Firmin Didot laid claim to the Prime Ministry of the Book. The portfolio was divided into what might be called the Department of Publishing, presided over by Pierre, and the Department of Types and Printing, to which Firmin devoted his genius. Pierre established his reputation by the publication of his famous *Racine* in 1801, printed in the Didot type, designed by Firmin, on beautiful paper hand made by the Didots themselves. Never, up to that moment, did a printed volume receive the honor of having such scrupulous pains taken in every phase of its manufacture combined with such manifold improvements in the mechanical processes associated with it. That even thus it did not surpass the masterpieces of Aldus Manutius is conclusive evidence that "the art of printing, like Minerva, was born fully armed."

I have always believed that without Baskerville there would have been no distinguished Didot volumes. The Frenchmen were great type founders. They invented the process of stereotyping, and in general advanced the mechanical side of bookmaking. When Baskerville so unexpectedly astonished the world by his extraordinary publications, the Didots realized that they had it within their power to establish a lasting fame. France went wild over their *éditions du Louvre*, so called because the Government, in recognition of their attempts to emulate the achievements of Étienne, granted the Didots the quarters in the Louvre formerly occupied by the Imprimerie Royale. In spite of Pierre's patronizing comments on Baskerville's work in general and on his paper in particular, — "To make such paper is not a secret, and if it ever becomes one it will not be worth finding out," — he paid the English printer the sincere compliment of imitating him in many ways. Even his ink was made from a formula closely matching Baskerville's. But when it comes to presswork, the Didots must be given full credit. Even to this day French presswork — the type just touching the paper enough to become a part of it without showing the impression unpleasantly on the reverse side — is the model for the world.

One of the most important events during the premiership of the Didots was the fact that King Book received an entirely new wardrobe. The Didot type, cut simultaneously with that of the famous Italian printer, Giambattista Bodoni, of Parma, introduced a new style which took the world by storm. The old-

OEUVRES

DE BOILEAU.

DISCOURS AU ROI.

Jeune et vaillant héros, dont la haute sagesse
N'est point le fruit tardif d'une lente vieillesse,
Et qui seul, sans ministre, à l'exemple des dieux,
Soutiens tout par toi-même, et vois tout par tes yeux,
GRAND ROI, si jusqu'ici, par un trait de prudence,
J'ai demeuré pour toi dans un humble silence,
Ce n'est pas que mon cœur, vainement suspendu,
Balance pour t'offrir un encens qui t'est dû:
Mais je sais peu louer; et ma muse tremblante
Fuit d'un si grand fardeau la charge trop pesante,
Et, dans ce haut éclat où tu te viens offrir,
Touchant à tes lauriers, craindroit de les flétrir.
Ainsi, sans m'aveugler d'une vaine manie,
Je mesure mon vol à mon foible génie:
Plus sage en mon respect que ces hardis mortels
Qui d'un indigne encens profanent tes autels;

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN TYPE

The Didot and the Bodoni types, cut almost simultaneously, produced a complete revolution in the typographical dress of the Book which lasted until almost the middle of the XIX century.

(From Oeuvres de Boileau. *Pierre Didot. Paris,* 1819. $11\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ *inches.)*

style letters, which had prevailed since the days of Jenson's Roman face, suddenly became as unpopular as long skirts are today, and the designs of the modern types seemed so securely fixed in the fancy of book-lovers that some type founders went so far as to throw away their old-style matrices.

There is a distinct charm in the Didot and the Bodoni types, in spite of the squared serifs[1] and the emphasis given to the thick and the thin stroke of the letters; but when the principle established by this design was applied to the so-called "modern" family, the precision of the characters produced a mechanical effect which does not lend itself to an artistic page. After the Didots and Bodoni, the new design was not well handled, and printing in general slumped in workmanship and quality. About 1844, Charles Whittingham the younger, of the Chiswick Press, in London, showed an interest in the history and precedent of the art of the Book which made him stand out as the only printer of his period whose name is remembered. It was he who was responsible for the revival of the beautiful old-style letters, which had been neglected for half a century. The House of Longmans was at this time preparing to bring out the *Diary of Lady Willoughby*, and Whittingham insisted that this particular volume called loudly for an old-style dress. With its publication, the Caslon fonts again came into general use, and since then the old-style and the modern designs have been retained, side by side, each exercising its own function and expressing its own message.

[1] The small, finishing strokes of a letter are called *serifs*.

After the Didots, publishing and printing became still further divorced, with inevitable detriment to the Book. For nearly a hundred years, with the temporary exception of the Chiswick Press, all thought of co-ordinating the elements of a volume was thrown to the winds. A printer was a printer, and only that. A book was simply a larger piece of printing than an advertisement for a lost dog, and the same principles entered into its production. King Book was shorn of the glory of his robes, and cobwebs gathered in the empty portfolio of his Prime Minister. From a mechanical standpoint, books were well made in certain American and English establishments, but printing was exercised wholly as a trade.

I speak feelingly of this period, for these conditions obtained when, as a youngster, I found myself injected into the making of books, and I shall never forget how dismally I regarded the future as I saw it then. Publishers at that time had not come to realize that it was impossible to build a book properly by a series of contracts, executed by different hands. The result was that the printer had little incentive to study historical background, or to acquire more than a superficial knowledge of the constituent elements which combined with his own typography and presswork. In other lines of business, clients accepted the idea that the trained expert knew more about his profession than they did, and expected to receive his advice as to the best way to express their own ideas. In the making of books, however, a vicious circle seemed to operate: because the publisher did not seek such advice, the

Ioh. Despauterii Niniuitæ in

ARTEM VERSIFICATORIAM PRAEFATIO.

IOHANNES DESPAVTERIVS NINIVITA GEORgio Haloino nobilissimo heroi, & vndecunque doctissimo, domino Haloini & Comminii, suo Mecœnati humanissimo, S. P. D.

ARTEM Versificatoriam (quam Stichologian Græci vocant) literaturæ partem vt difficillimam, ita longe præcellentissimam, & poetis in primis necessariam, tuo nomini consecrare nobilissime domine ausus sum: vtinam eiusmodi vt vel tuis in nos meritis, vel meo erga te studio respondeat. Noui ego delicatissimum tuum palatum, noui acerrimam censuram, cui nihil non exactissimum placeat. Vellem equidem celsitudini tuæ meliora deuouere: quod quum non possim, ferenda puto Mecœnati mea qualiacunque munuscula. Nam (vt Plinius ait) & dijs lacte rustici, multæque gentes supplicant: & mola tantum salsa litant qui non habent thura. Dabis igitur (vt spero) audaciæ nostræ veniam: nempe soles meas esse aliquid putare nugas. Non adeò sum mihi Suffenus, vt nesciam artem meam esse imperfectam: tamen audendum est: quia nostra præcepta (vt Columellæ verbis vtar) non consummare scientiam, sed adiuuare, promittunt. Nam (vt idem ait, & me plurimum consolatur) in omni genere scientiæ, & summis admiratio veneratióque, & inferioribus merita laus contingit. Erunt fortassis nonnulli sophistæ, vel poetastri, pseudographi, physiologi, legulei, sacrificuli, asophi, plani, & tenebriones, qui cauillabuntur hanc artem tenuiorem esse, quàm quæ tanto viro dedicari debuerit. Verum hi tuo iudicio vehementer errant: vt qui scias ipsos orbis dominatores hanc artem vt excellentissimam summopere excoluisse. Augustum dico & Germanicum & alios multos. Itaque ex omnibus ferme veterum libris conatus sum aliquid in medium afferre, vt iuuarem pro meis viribus linguam Latinam instaurare. In qua re quicquid profeci, tuum est: ex quo plus didici, quàm ex alio quouis præceptore. Abest dicto assentatio: id nouit deus. Tu mihi Aristarchus, tu Mœtius, tu Quintilius. Quod cum è multis literis tuis lacteo lepore profluentibus, tum ex ijs quas hoc anno pridie Iduum Ianuariarum ad nos dedisti, liquet clarissime. sic enim scribis, Adsit nobis deliciatum linguæ Latinæ zelus & auiditas, sit inter nos elegantiæ maioris honesta disceptatio, maneátque in scrinijs nostris. non patiar etenim scripta mea in vulgus prodire, prius quàm priscos authores ad vnguem perlegerim, ne fortè in errorem incidam. Si hoc fecerimus, miraberis quantum fructum inde concipiemus. Hunc in modum & in alijs epistolis me frequenter monuisti, ne editionem meam præcipitarem, & hoc auriculis meis subinde instillasti, Nescit vox missa reuerti. Et nonnunquam territasti Virgiliano exemplo, qui AEneida testamento cremari iussit, quòd eam non castigauerat. Quo factum est, vt præter eos, quos antea perlegeram poetas (qui fuerant admodum pauci, & neoterici plures quàm veteres) dederit mihi perlegendos nobilitas tua Lucretium, & (quem antea cum Horatio, Ouidio, Martiale, Iuuenale, Persio perlegeram) Virgilium: præterea Manilium, Germanicum, Rufum, Ciceronem in Arato, Catullum, Tibullum, Propertium, Senecam in tragœdijs, Valerium Flaccum, Statbium, Papinium, Ausonium, Claudianum, Sidonium Apollinarem, Columellam, Palladium. Tum etiam grammaticos, & alios scriptores plurimos. Ex quibus vehementer emendaui & auxi artem meam, coactus multos taxare pro communi vtilitate, qui maximo in pretio habentur: quia licet doctissimi fuerint, tamen non potuere inter tot barbariei milites nihil vitij contrahere. Ideo nequem iniuste culpasse puter, libet altius repetere quanta sit inter poetas antiquos & neotericos differentia: vt more boni agricolæ, ferere ingenuum volentis agrum, liberem arua prius fruticibus, falce rubos, filicémque resecem, vt sciamus inter poetas quos imitari, & quos vitare deceat. Neque enim omnibus passim credere debemus, sed illis duntaxat qui floruerunt inter ducentos circiter quinquaginta annos ab ortu Ciceronis ad Antonium Pium: hoc est ante Christianum natalem annis centum, ad centesimum quinquagesimum, ex quo salutem Christianam numeramus. Nam & Latinus sermo, quemadmodum & cætera mortalia, aliquãdo incœpit, habuítque suam

A XVI CENTURY MASTERPIECE

This volume was selected by Firmin Didot as the best example of Étienne's printing in Roman types. The initials are by Geoffroi Tory, and it is from these initials that Bruce Rogers adapted those used in his *Montaigne*. *(From Johannis Despauterii Niniuitae:* Commentarii Grammatici. *Paris*, 1537. $10\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ *inches. Volume owned by the Author.)*

may be, I cannot perceive any thing in it beyond or exceeding that of many other writers of his age, much lesse that it in any sort approacheth that ancient divinitie. And the surname Great, we attribute and fasten the same on Princes, that have nothing in them exceeding popular greatnesse.

THE FIFTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Of the parcimonie of our Forefathers.

ATTILIUS REGULUS, Generall of the Romans armie in Affrike,[1] in the middest of his glorie and victorie against the Carthaginians, writ unto the common-wealth, that a hyne or plough-boy, whom he had left alone to oversee and husband his land (which in all was but seven acres of ground), was run away from his charge, and had stolne from him all his implements and tools, belonging to his husbandrie; craving leave to be discharged, and that he might come home to looke to his businesse, for feare his wife and children should therby be endomaged. The Senate tooke order for him, and appointed another man to looke to his land and businesse, and made that good unto him which the other had stolne from him, and appointed his wife and children to be maintained at the common-wealths charge. Cato the elder, returning Consul from Spaine,[2] sold his horse of service, to save the monie he should have spent for his transport by sea into Italy; and, being chiefe governor in Sardinia, went all his visitations a foot, having no other traine but one officer of the common-welth, who carried his gowne and a vessell to do sacrifice in, and for the most part carried his male himselfe. He boasted that he never woare gowne that cost him more than ten crowns, nor sent more than one shilling sterling to the market for one whole daies provision, and had no Countrie house rough-cast or painted over. Scipio Æmilianus,[3] after he had triumphed twice, and twice been Consull, went on a solemne Legation, accompanied and attended on only with seven servants. It is reported that Homer had never any more than one servant,[4] Plato three, and Zeno, chiefe of the Stoikes sect, none at all. Tiberius Gracchus,[5] being then

A MODERN MASTERPIECE

This page, set in Montaigne type designed by Bruce Rogers, is an example of the best modern work. The initials and headpieces are based frankly on the Geoffroi Tory designs, but are interpreted instead of copied. *(From* Montaigne. *Riverside Press*, 1902. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$ *inches.)*

printer did not train himself to offer it; and because the printer was not a qualified expert, the publisher did not consult him.

"Caviling with a publisher about good or bad taste," once said Theodore L. De Vinne, that splendid old-line printer of the 1890's, "is of doubtful propriety. The printer who poses as an oracle of good taste will be rated, to paraphrase Emerson's expression, as 'a typographical peacock.'" A hundred years earlier, by way of contrast, John Baskerville received from Dodsley, the London publisher, a plate to be included in a volume the Birmingham printer was making for him. Baskerville did not approve the suggestion, and flatly refused to insert the illustration. "If you will accept my judgment and skill," he wrote significantly, "they are at your service."

Today this attitude on the part of so fine a printer as De Vinne would seem incredible. He proved himself a thorough scholar and placed the world in his debt for his volumes upon *The Practice of Typography*; yet even he refused to recognize printing as an art. No books were ever better made mechanically than those of the De Vinne Press, but the combination of types and decorations was frequently inharmonious. The volumes as a whole lacked that "something," discovered by later artist printers, which brings their product nearer to the masterpieces of the old-time makers of books. As I now explain it to myself, the conscientious old-school printers represented by De Vinne studied the work of their predecessors as a series of separate mechanical processes, while the artist printer has always

regarded it as a creative whole. They failed to grasp the now undisputed fact that historic background is a twin sister of the knowledge of type, and that familiarity with precedent is an essential complement of mechanical ingenuity. A carpenter may know the characteristics of every wood and be an expert in the use of tools; he may be able to make a splendid Colonial window or a beautiful Renaissance door. This stamps him as a master workman, but he will never be a master builder until he learns the *significance* of what he has done, and demonstrates how properly to combine the constituent elements. Again I find the injunction of the early Humanists insisting upon recognition: the builder of books must absorb, he must give out again, but — and this is the vital point — what he gives out must be made richer by his own interpretation.

Then, in 1890, along came William Morris.[1] When the Kelmscott volumes began to appear, no one associated with the making of books had ever heard of him. When he was promptly installed as Prime Minister to the Book by the voice of an hysterically enthusiastic people, the old-line printers thought the world had gone mad! Many were the "sham" Kelmscotts which were perpetrated in America by publishers seeking to capitalize the Morris craze, but, as is always the case in copying without understanding, they emphasized the weaknesses of the William Morris style instead of its underlying merits.

I never understood a Kelmscott volume until I became acquainted with the personality of William Morris

[1] See also p. 148.

himself. He was an Oxford man, who originally intended to enter the Church, but a vacation trip through the cathedral towns of France placed him so heavily under the Gothic influence that he decided to take up architecture. Then Rossetti's work affected him, and he began to study painting, at which he was never successful, although he showed much ability as an illuminator of books. From this, he turned toward decoration and designing — rugs, wall papers, stained glass. Of his furniture, the Morris chair still perpetuates his name, yet what a far cry a Morris chair seems from a Kelmscott *Chaucer*!

What Morris really sought in all these experiments was Beauty, and at last the vision of King Book with all his gorgeous appurtenances came to him. Willing indeed was he to become Prime Minister. Beauty was the slogan of his campaign. Beauty was the watchword of his administration. His type might not be particularly legible, but it must be beautiful; his printed page might be so overloaded with type and decoration as to make it unreadable, — but it certainly is beautiful![1] And the designs, the paper, the presswork, are all surpassing expressions of his watchword. Here was a Prime Minister who had little concern for the proletariat! His volumes were for the fortunate few who could afford to buy them; but even so, the indirect results of forcing the standard so high was to create an average quality just that much nearer to the ideal. Morris taught the world that it was still possible, in the midst of diverting modern conditions, to preserve

[1] See Plate on p. 154.

unity in making books, and to produce volumes which were objects of sheer beauty.

The effect of his work is still felt. Certain atrocities in practice in the 1890's, such as the multiplication of types upon a title page, have quietly disappeared. Printers who had a longing in their souls for better things were encouraged to stand by their ideals, and out of it all has come the great advance in the standard of making books in America and England.

Without William Morris there would have been no Cobden-Sanderson. The two men were intimate while Morris was expressing his ideals at the Kelmscott Press, and Cobden-Sanderson, then over forty years of age, was still groping for the proper medium to convey his own — as yet unspoken — message. He had tried engineering, reading for the Church, the study of literature, law, and had even been a manual laborer. One day, while calling on the Morrises, Mrs. Morris said to him, "Why don't you learn bookbinding? That would add an art to our little community, and we would work together." Morris himself was sympathetic, and in that moment the Doves Press was conceived. Morris had named his own successor to the portfolio of Prime Minister to the Book when he would have to relinquish it. During the intervening years Cobden-Sanderson learned the underlying principles of his predecessor's *régime* — Truth and Beauty; and as time went on he came to express them in clearer terms than even the master himself.

The prime ministry of Cobden-Sanderson should rightly be a joint tenancy, for while the Cobden-

Sanderson bindings would inevitably have won their place, the Doves Press books could never have come into being except for Emery Walker. In America, at least, too little is known of the tremendous contribution to the Book made during the past forty years by this Master Builder. The Doves type, to my mind the finest face ever cut, was his design; his association with William Morris gave him a practical experience which made the composition and the presswork of the Doves Press books so superlative; and since the dramatic gesture of Cobden-Sanderson in closing the Doves Press, and consigning the Doves type to the Thames, Emery Walker has given and still gives generously of his knowledge and artistic taste to other private presses whose books fail to record the debt they owe him.

The inspiration Morris gave to printers was vital, but even more important was the educational impress of his work upon lovers of books. Readers in the past have not fully realized how little they understood what the artist printer sought to attain, or that unwittingly they have held him back. Even many of those who called themselves booklovers based that claim upon desire rather than upon actual knowledge of books.

There was the reader who was interested only in the contents of a book. So long as the print was legible, the physical appearance of the volume concerned him little. There was the self-styled "booklover," who gained greater enjoyment from his reading if the vehicle conveying the thought from the author to himself was constructed along artistic lines. He knew that the physical appearance and "feel" of the book satisfied

him, but he could not explain just how it differed from a volume lacking this distinction. Then there was the collector, who never read the book, but experienced the keenest joy in owning a copy of some title which possessed a value because of its rarity. And, finally, there was the happiest of all living creatures — the booklover collector, who surrounded himself with volumes rare because of their intrinsic worth, the beauty of their *format*, or the glamour of their association, and knew enough about books to appreciate his treasures.

Of these four classes, the first was fully entitled to enjoy his indifference. He knew what he wanted, and he got it, whether it was a detective story or a biography. The collectors were undoubtedly securing exactly what they sought, either intelligently or unintelligently; but those who had not learned the difference between books that are rare because of their merits rather than their defects deprived themselves of the real joy of the quest.

Readers still classify in the same groups, but the classification is so rapidly changing that the vicious circle gives signs of becoming benign. Publishers are now taking pride in issuing volumes of distinctive typographic treatment, assistants in the best publishing houses have become students of the history and precedent of typography, and printers are encouraged to consider themselves creative artists instead of mechanical artisans. And the most gratifying sign of the awakening is found among the workmen. In every bookmaking establishment there is at least one who handles the type with greater respect because he recognizes

each character as a modern talisman, expressing its part in that miraculous transference of thought; or caresses his press with deeper affection because he knows it to be an instrument of God. Think what it means to these men (who may not even yet have been given the opportunity for expression) to see the general understanding and appreciation grow apace! The progress has been slow but it has been steady. Today the recognition of well-made volumes is the reward being reaped by those few courageous pioneers who have pursued their ideals in the face of apparent indifference on the part of the public, and the amused indulgence of the old-line printers.

I remember two incidents in connection with the Society of Printers, in Boston, which give an excellent illustration of the attitude of even the best-known printers twenty years ago. A number of us, who believed that books were more than type, and paper, and binders' boards, had joined together for the definite purpose of studying and discussing the history and precedent of the art. We met once in so often, we arranged exhibitions, and in general did our bit toward arousing, on the part of the public, an intelligent interest in well-made books.

There was a really gratifying response, yet our little society was a source of amusement to the heads of the various old-line bookmaking establishments in Boston.

"The Society of Printers?" one of these men remarked with an indulgent smile. "Why, there isn't a real printer among them!"

He was right, measuring the printer by the old-

THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI

BOOK FIRST

I

LL men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, or which may properly resemble excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand; but they ought not to attempt so fine an enterprise till they have passed the age of forty. This duty occurs to my own mind, now that I am travelling beyond the term of fifty-eight years, and am in Florence, the city of my birth. Many untoward things can I remember, such as happen to all who live upon our earth; and from those adversities I am now more free than at any previous period of my career—nay, it seems to me that I enjoy greater content of soul and health of body than ever I did in bygone years. I can also bring to mind some pleasant goods and some inestimable evils, which, when I turn my thoughts backward, strike terror in me, and astonishment that I should have reached this age of fifty-eight, wherein, thanks be to God, I am still travelling prosperously forward.

II

It is true that men who have laboured with some show of excellence, have already given knowledge

HARMONIOUS COMBINATION OF TYPE AND DECORATION

This page, set in the Mountjoye type specially designed by John Bell, of London, shows careful spacing, exact justification of the initial letter, design of proper weight to combine with the line of the type, and is a splendid example of the best modern typography.

(From Life of Benvenuto Cellini. *Printed by D. B. Updike, Merrymount Press, Boston, in* 1906, *for Brentano, New York. Exact size.)*

fashioned yardstick. Still, we were proud to claim Bruce Rogers[1] and Berkeley Updike[2] as members, even if they were not "printers." We would have been pleased to include St. John Hornby, the accomplished master of the Ashendene Press[3] in London, in the same category. While "real" printers had been studying the case and learning how to trip a press, these disciples of Aldus and Étienne had assimilated the underlying principles of the old masters, had gained an understanding through their expanded experience with life, and since then have given these basic principles original expression in some of the most beautiful books of our generation. Printing as an art has much to be thankful for that men like these brought to their work a knowledge of what the Book stands for, an appreciation of the value of applying rather than copying precedent, and, withal, a freedom of action which has lifted bookmaking out of the rut in which it must have remained had succeeding generations of printers continued to study its development only within the limited confines of a printing office.

Soon after the formation of the Society of Printers, I gave three lectures at the Boston Public Library on "Printing as an Art." The day after the first lecture, I received a telephone call from the head of still another famous bookmaking establishment.

"I see by the paper that you gave a lecture last night on the subject of 'Printing as an Art'?"

"Yes," I admitted.

[1] See Plate on p. 57. [2] See Plate on p. 65.
[3] See Plate on opp. page.

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to thinke that gentle Dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull wearinesse of former fight
Hauing yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine,
With bowres, and beds, and Ladies deare delight:
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe returnd againe.

THE SECOND CANTO.

The guilefull great Enchaunter parts
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire falsehood steps,
And workes him wofull ruth.

BY THIS THE NORTHERNE WAGONER HAD SET
HIS SEVENFOLD TEME BEHIND
THE STEDFAST STARRE,
THAT WAS IN OCEAN WAVES YET NEVER WET,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To all, that in the wide deepe wandring arre:
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing vp the Easterne hill,
Full enuious that night so long his roome did fill.

When those accursed messengers of hell,
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged Spright
Came to their wicked maister, and gan tell
Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding night:
Who all in rage to see his skilfull might
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine
And sad Proserpines wrath, them to affright.
But when he saw his threatning was but vaine,
He cast about, and searcht his balefull bookes againe.

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,
And that false other Spright, on whom he spred
A seeming body of the subtile aire,
Like a young Squire, in loues and lusty-hed
His wanton dayes that euer loosely led,
Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:
Those two he tooke, and in a secret bed,
Couered with darknesse and misdeeming night,
Them both together laid, to ioy in vaine delight.

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull hast
Vnto his guest, who after troublous sights
And dreames, gan now to take more sound repast,
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearefull frights,
As one aghast with feends or damned sprights,
And to him calls, Rise rise vnhappy Swaine,
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked wights
Haue knit themselues in Venus shamefull chaine;
Come see, where your false Lady doth her honour staine.

Faerie Queene
The I. Booke
Ca. i. 55—ij. 8

All in amaze he suddenly vp start
With sword in hand, and with the old man went;
Who soone him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely ment
In wanton lust and lewd embracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,
The eye of reason was with rage yblent,
And would haue slaine them in his furious ire,
But hardly was restreined of that aged sire.

Returning to his bed in torment great,
And bitter anguish of his guiltie sight,
He could not rest, but did his stout heart eat,
And wast his inward gall with deepe despight,
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night.
At last faire Hesperus in highest skie
Had spent his lampe, & brought forth dawning light,
Then vp he rose, and clad him hastily;
The Dwarfe him brought his steed: so both away do fly.

Now when the rosy-fingred Morning faire,
Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,
Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire,
And the high hils Titan discouered,
The royall virgin shooke off drowsy-hed,
And rising forth out of her baser bowre,
Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled,
And for her Dwarfe, that wont to wait each houre;
Then gan she waile and weepe, to see that woefull stowre.

And after him she rode with so much speede
As her slow beast could make; but all in vaine:
For him so far had borne his light-foot steede,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdaine,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;
Yet she her weary limbes would neuer rest,
But euery hill and dale, each wood and plaine
Did search, sore grieued in her gentle brest,
He so vngently left her, whom she loued best.

15

A MODERN ENGLISH MASTERPIECE

The volumes which continue to issue from the Ashendene Press in London maintain all the traditions of the old master printers. St. John Hornby's type is based upon that cut by Sweynheym and Pannartz at Subiaco. In using it he shows consummate skill in the combination of initial letters and text, capitals, and blank.

(From Faerie Queene. *Ashendene Press, London,* 1923. $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ *inches.)*

"Anybody there?"

"Yes; the hall was crowded."

"You don't mean it!" His surprise was genuine. "Well— I don't quite get the idea. Next time I see you, I want you to tell me what the devil Art has to do with Printing."

As I look back over these thirty-five years, I am impressed particularly by the fact that those makers of books who have contributed most in restoring printing to its traditional position among the arts have approached it from without rather than from within. No old-line printer could be made to see that the horizon as viewed over the top of his type cases was necessarily restricted. Morris and Cobden-Sanderson were fitting themselves by everything they did before entering upon their life career — not to set type, or to run a press, or to sew a volume, but to create a Book. They brought to their task from without something essential and permanent. They approached printing not as a trade but as "the art preservative of all arts," and summoned all the other arts to their assistance.

If I were asked to name a single modern volume which to me seems most fully to express the basic principles these Prime Ministers have established, I should unhesitatingly select the *Doves Bible*. It is in five quarto volumes, printed in one size of type, with no paragraphs and with no leads between the lines. The only decoration employed consists of simple but beautiful initial letters at the beginning of each book, printed in red. From title page to colophon it has inspired me as no piece of printing I have ever seen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. JOHN

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, & the world was made by him, & the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, & dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, & grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, & denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, & said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the

THE PERFECTION OF THE DOVES BIBLE

This volume seems, as nearly as is humanly possible, exactly to express the idea and intention of the artist printers who created it—balance in every detail, giving the subject matter dignity and added significance.

(Printed by T. J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker. Doves Press, London, 1905. 8 × 6 inches.)

Every one who has sought perfection realizes its elusiveness. Those of us who have tried to put ourselves into our work must be the first to acknowledge that it is our imperfection which expresses itself most readily. But here is a volume which seems, as nearly as is humanly possible, exactly to express the idea and intention of the men who created it. The text is from the Cambridge University Press reprint of the 1611 edition, which had been quietly and silently revised and corrected until the greatest possible accuracy had been secured; the cut of the type absolutely satisfies the composite definition of the Type Ideal; the composition is so splendid and the spacing so excellent that, when the first proofs were sent to the Cambridge University Press to be read, the readers could not believe that it had not already been corrected; the simplicity of the page itself, the perfection of the margins, the decoration given by the restrained use of capitals, the evenness of color, the skill of the impression by which the type just bites into the surface of the paper enough to become a part of it, the softness of the paper itself, the purity and beauty of the flexible vellum binding — balance, balance in every detail, giving to the subject matter a dignity and added significance which is a joy forever. Emery Walker is entitled to full credit for the type, for the text, and for the supervision of the composition and the presswork. The volumes stand as a tangible expression of the fine principles laid down by Cobden-Sanderson in his *Ideal Book,* translated into terms of bookbuilding by Emery Walker.

Incidentally I may say that my own copy of this

last-named guide for all makers of books, past, present, and future, has a personal history that makes it priceless to me. I had sought the volume for months without success. When Cobden-Sanderson was my guest in Boston in 1908 he may have seen the covetous gleam in my eye as I handled his own copy, from which he read extracts during his lectures; for after he left I found the book reposing on my desk, with an inscription which made it wholly mine.

The *Doves Bible* revealed to me what that elusive "something" was for which I sought. The architects of these volumes that still hold me went back of the history of the art. They became familiar with, but they discounted the monuments of the earlier master printers; they discovered for themselves the basic principles upon which the genius of their predecessors rested. These old-time worthies put themselves into their work, and so did they. It did not interest Emery Walker or Cobden-Sanderson to put some one else into his work, or to try to express himself in some one else's way. The modern message might be more or less vital than the old, but it was his own; and that message, as typifying his own personality, is the something which makes the builder of the *Doves Bible* the man I want to know.

The Prime Ministry of the Book is so proud a position that it fully warrants the present competition to earn the right to occupy it. The painter who gives permanence on canvas, through the medium of his brushes and pigments, to some wonderful scene Nature spreads before him, or perpetuates for all time the likeness of a

beautiful woman, at best displays his genius to but comparatively few. How much greater is the opportunity for the printer! To him is entrusted that intangible jewel, the gem of thought. Through his creative efforts it is given a proper and a permanent setting. Instead of a single original, hung in some gallery, or at most a few copies, his handiwork is multiplied by the hundreds or thousands, and is spread before the world. Can such a responsibility be lightly considered — can such an opportunity be too highly appreciated?

"Are we not driven to the conclusion," asks Carlyle, "that of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things called Books?"

CHAPTER III

Books "Al Fresco"

III

BOOKS "AL FRESCO"

YEARS before my first visit to Paris, I knew that one of the points of interest that city held for me would be the old bookstalls on the left bank of the Seine. This conviction was perhaps first formed after reading Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, in which the vivacious chronicler describes his experience on the Quai de Conti, where he endeavored to secure a copy of *Hamlet* to refresh his memory as to the advice Polonius gave his son upon the subject of traveling. The fact that the traveler was diverted from his purpose by the unexpected appearance of the beguiling *fille de chambre* did not prevent the author from giving a charming picture of the contact between the would-be purchaser and the bookstall man; and it may have been just as well that Polonius was not put in the embarrassing position of having his counsels so rudely disregarded!

When I first ventured forth upon my bouquinistic Odysseys, I used to start at the Quai Montebello, across from Notre Dame, and end on the Quai d'Orsay, opposite the museum of the Legion of Honor — a marvelous journey to complete within so brief a space of time, taking me from the Paris of the Middle Ages, through the Paris of the Bourbons and the Revolution, into the Paris of today. The contrast between the

students' quarter and the Faubourg Saint Germain is not so striking now as it used to be; but could a more fitting atmosphere be created in which to pore over ancient volumes and to ruminate upon the present and the past!

In later years I have covered less territory. The stalls containing schoolbooks, a godsend to the students of the neighboring Sorbonne and Collège de France, — once largely confined to the Quai Saint-Michel, — have gradually overflowed upon the Quai des Grands Augustins, and contain little of interest from a physical or historical standpoint; and the itinerant stands hawking celluloid combs, collars, and fountain pens, which now dispute parking space with the *boutiques* on the Quai de Conti, suggest a fallen estate from the time when Papa Malerey boasted rarer volumes than the indoor bookshops could produce.

So now I confine my book hunting almost wholly to the Quai Malaquais and to the Quai Voltaire, for the book stalls on the Quai d'Orsay below the Pont Royal are as uninteresting as those above the Pont des Arts. When I become foot weary, I return to the Quai de Conti and take my favorite seat outside a restaurant located, as nearly as I can tell, upon the very spot where the Café Anglais once stood — that famous *rendezvous* of the *élite* in the eighteenth century. Most people, even Parisians, recall the Café Anglais only after it moved to the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Rue Marivaux; but that is because of its later popularity under the Empire, when Alphonse Karr, Jules Janin, Théophile Gautier,

Adolphe Gaiffe, and the Duc de Gramont-Caderousse honored it with their patronage. Or perhaps the extravagant dinners given there by the gay Prince Demidoff may have helped to keep its fame alive. Some evening, after you have ordered your numbered duck and your *pannequets soufflés* at the Tour d'Argent, get Mine Host Terrail to tell you how the Café Anglais, with its marvelous cellar, became joined to his own ancient establishment through the bonds of matrimony celebrated between the families of the proprietors.

So, while I sip my Vermouth at the little table in front of the Café des Beaux Arts, and watch the *bouquineurs* as they search for what they probably will never find, I like to conjure up the scene I might have witnessed sitting in front of the Café Anglais a century and a half before — for this was the celebrated Faubourg Saint Germain. All fashionable Paris promenaded there each afternoon,[1] the smart women of fashion in company with exquisite escorts, their cheeks bright with rouge, the color heightened by patches of black court-plaster; wearing petticoats of the latest mode, with fascinating Chinese fans in their hands, and their trains held from the soiling ground by weirdly costumed lackeys.

The bookstalls were a part of the *grand ensemble*. Thither the gallant blade would lead his fair companion, to pick up, as if by chance, some choice example of the printer's or the binder's art which he had previously located and concealed, and to discuss it with affected erudition. Then, disdaining to inquire the price, he

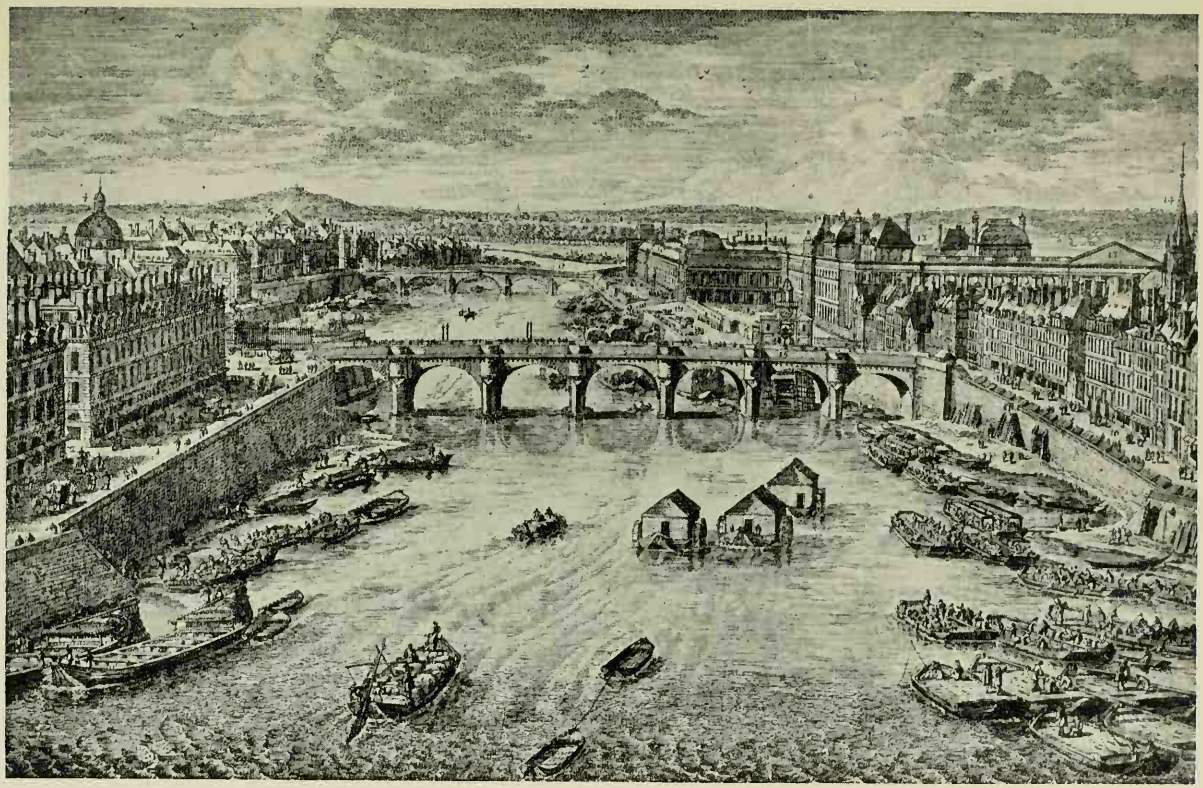
[1] See Plate at p. 78.

would toss a golden louis to the *bouquiniste* as the volume was gracefully presented to its new owner.

The French Revolution put an end to all this gayety, and while the economic conditions which resulted flooded the bookstalls with rare and beautiful volumes from the libraries of impoverished noble families, — priceless Aldines, rare Elzevirs with wide margins, superb bindings by Nicolas Ève,[1] Du Seuil, and Le Gascon,[2] — society never returned, thus proving that the literary adventures had been of secondary importance to the social pleasures. This was the period when the supply of rare books greatly exceeded the demand. Pujoult records the fact that his grocer delivered his wares wrapped in full sheets of the *Lettres de Voltaire*, printed in fine type on handmade paper. "I came to read this collection," Pujoult remarks drily, "solely because I am fond of Gruyère cheese and cherries."

By the time I began my browsing, many of the traditional customs had been abandoned. Occasionally the venders would bark their wares, — *Allons! vite! toutes sortes de livres curieux! Bon marché! Un franc, un franc cinquante la pièce!* — but the loud calls had become modified by police insistence, and later entirely disappeared. The unimportant volumes were still classified in trays marked at various prices, but the better ones were arranged in rows by size rather than by subject or value. In the old days, the "basement bargain" method obtained: if a book remained a week in one tray it was automatically moved down into the group at the next lower price. Many an impecunious collector has

[1] See Plate at p. 206. [2] See Plate at p. 208.



THE QUAYS ON THE LEFT BANK AT PARIS

In the middle of the XVIII century the quays were the fashionable parade ground of Parisian society. The bookstalls were a part of the *grand ensemble*. Note the old books piled on the parapet at right of illustration.

(From an XVIII Century Engraving.)

patiently watched the downward march of a coveted volume, only to have it snatched from under his very nose because he waited a day too long!

No longer do the *bouquinistes* laboriously trundle their stock back and forth each morning and evening in clumsy wheelbarrows. Since 1890 well-made wooden trays, lined with zinc, with lids that open into sloping roofs, have contained the curious mixture of modern trash, old rubbish, and the occasional pearl. These trays are shut down and locked, each night, to iron bars firmly embedded in the granite parapet.

The replenishing of the stock is not so simple now as formerly. In years gone by, the bulk of it came from the auction rooms, being made up of the discarded portions of private libraries of too little interest even to warrant the cost of cataloguing. The *bouquinistes* used to bid these in blindly, wrapped in packages of from ten to forty volumes. Later they sorted them out and arranged them on their *boutiques*, pricing them to accord with a system each devised for himself. Whether his classification was right or wrong was decided by his customers. Some treasures undoubtedly came through theft on the part of servants or children; but the bookstall men, as a class, have always been honest tradesmen, and they have usually made sure that such sales were authorized. Now they depend almost wholly on stock secured from private individuals dispersing their libraries, and, as the indoor bookshops get first choice, the remnants could scarcely be expected to make as attractive bargains as were earlier disclosed.

Twenty years ago Leopold Delisle, then librarian of

the Bibliothèque Nationale, made me realize the place the bookstall men hold in the life of Paris. Through him I also learned of the long contest between three well-known characters of the last century for the proud title of *Doyen des Bouquinistes*. There was Père Malerey, who had plied his trade at the same stall on the Quai de Conti for sixty-two years before he dried up like the parchment of some old book and was wafted away to a permanent shelf in the library of Kingdom Come. He had a real knowledge of the books he handled, and when he made a price that was what you paid, or you left the volume for some more appreciative purchaser. Customers came to buy but remained to talk, for Papa Malerey was a marvelous mimic, and enjoyed nothing better than to act out some amusing experience with an overconfident purchaser who had expected to beat him down in his price.

Père Rosez, so Monsieur Delisle's story went, embraced the responsibilities of bookselling not from a love of literature but because his wife, who was the proprietress of a flourishing stationery shop in the Rue des Saints-Pères, refused to give him money for his tobacco. He made an average profit of eight sous a day, but that covered his smoking expenses and was almost twice as much as a soldier of France earned, so why complain? And in both cases, the cost of living was otherwise provided. His claim to seniority was based on his age rather than on his length of service.

Papa Debas, it seems, boasted the friendship of Anatole France, who sketched him thus: "Every year his height grows less and his stall grows smaller and

lighter. If death leaves my old friend a little longer to live, a puff of wind will some day carry him off with the last pages of his books and the few oats that the neighboring horses drop from their grey nose bags. Meanwhile, he is almost happy. If he is poor, he does not think about it. He does not sell his books, but he reads them. He is an artist and a philosopher. He hails me, and says like a man who has read his morning paper, 'You come from the Academy. Did the young people speak well of Monsieur Hugo?' Then, with a wink, he whispers in my ear, 'A bit of a demagogue is Monsieur Hugo!'"

Père Debas began business on the quays a little earlier than Père Malerey, but was younger in years. Papa Malerey's own argument with Père Rosez would have lost against Père Debas, so he promptly altered his attitude. No one of the three ever yielded, and the crown was never officially awarded.

My particular friend among the *bouquinistes* is Charles Dodeman,[1] who has presided over his stall on the Quai Voltaire with quiet dignity for twenty-seven years. On the popular postcard of the quays, Dodeman is glorified as the "*poète bouquiniste*," and as the "oldest bookseller." The first portion of the description says too little, for he is not only a poet but an author, being the biographer of the bookstalls and a writer of romances as well; but he is by no means the present *doyen*. Dame Chevalier has been in business on the Quai d'Orsay for half a century, and Francisque on the Quai Malaquais for a period but five years less.

[1] See Plate at p. 82.

"The publishers know better," Père Dodeman explains simply, "but they think it helps them to sell their cards. In experience and in my love of books, perhaps I am the oldest."

He was a journalist once, but an accident to his leg forced him to change his life plan. He loved books. The profession of *bouquiniste* offered him a living, and when not serving customers, his time is his own for reading and writing. And it gives him an opportunity to meet kindred spirits in other lovers of books who frequent the quays.

"If I were on the editorial staff of some great journal, as once I hoped to be," he confided, "we should not be talking about books as we are now, should we? Life has its compensations."

Père Dodeman speaks a little English — a remnant from his childhood, for his mother was the daughter of an English vicar of Brighton. His father was a French cavalry officer, decorated by the Legion of Honor.

"My grandfather was a great friend of Lord Byron. It is natural that I should love books. — But I do not like the commerce," he adds with a grimace as a customer beats him down from five francs to four on a selected *bouquin*. "I would rather read a book or write a book than sell a book; but one must live."

The average bookstall man is more susceptible to bargaining than were his predecessors, due to the fact that he possesses less knowledge as to real values. He bases his trade largely on his cleverness in psychology, and regulates the price in accord with the eagerness or the stupidity of the customer. (Was it Emerson who

CHARLES DODEMAN, *POÈTE BOUQUINISTE*

The particular friend of the author, seated in front of his stall on the Quai Voltaire.

(From Mona Postcard I, reproduced by Courtesy of J. Lémery & Cie., Paris.)

said that a man's greatest asset is the imbecility of those about him?) Still, in a lesser way, he is the same eccentric, good-natured philosopher, combining ignorance and knowledge, *naïveté* and craft, to a surprising degree. They are characters, every one of them, and to win their confidence is a real achievement.

It would be a pity to have the "profession" decline or disappear, for these open-air venders are a national institution, and from the very beginning have earned their right to live by their successful struggle against governmental interference. In 1649 those Paris bookstores which boasted the dignity of indoor quarters succeeded in having an edict issued against the stall-keepers which made the offering of any book, particularly on the Pont Neuf or thereabouts, punishable by confiscation, the property thus seized being turned over to him who made complaint. Again, in 1721, after the *bouquinistes* had succeeded in re-establishing themselves, a Royal edict accused them of offering for sale volumes which were detrimental to the government of the State and to the purity of morals; and again the outdoor venders were obliged to seek other methods of plying their trade. They were attacked once more in 1822, but this time the only result was the establishment of rigid regulations, which, in the long run, undoubtedly improved their status.

Baron Haussmann, Napoleon III's Prefect, was responsible for the last attempt to dislodge them from their picturesque environment. The Baron's esthetic sense was offended by having the quays of Paris littered up with the wooden trays containing moth-eaten

volumes which became more and more offensive to the sight after long exposure to the elements. His great idea was to offer the bookstall men quarters in La Vallée, the old poultry market, which had been left vacant on the Quai des Grandes Augustins by the opening of the Halles Centrales. Baron Haussmann undoubtedly was influenced in this idea of establishing a central book-market in Paris by the custom which obtained at that time in certain German towns; but the *bouquinistes* had no notion of exercising their function within doors. For over a hundred years they had carried on their trade in the open, and the Latin temperament holds to tradition with stubborn tenacity.

In their time of tribulation a champion appeared in Paul Lacroix, a faithful friend and patron. "If I were asked who is the happiest man," Lacroix once said, "I would reply, a booklover. Whence it results that happiness is an old book." He was known to the *bouquinistes* by the affectionate nickname of "Bibliophile Jacob," and his interest in their welfare was as sincere as that he manifested in their volumes. He took the matter personally to the Emperor, and succeeded in arousing Napoleon's sympathy for the downtrodden stall keepers. The Emperor even made a round of the stalls with Bibliophile Jacob as his guide, and, as a result, took the *bouquinistes* under his protection.

A story still holds its legendary position which may have had a bearing upon the Emperor's decision. It is said that while making this memorable excursion with Bibliophile Jacob he passed along the Quai Malaquais, where he saw one of the venerable bookstall men seated

before a portable stove in which was burning a fire, kept alive by leaves of books which he tore out, a handful at a time, from a pile of volumes beside him. This was old Père Foy. The Emperor approached him, curious to know what volumes were considered of such little value as to be used for this purpose. At his request Père Foy gave him the book from which he had just torn a fresh supply of fuel. The title page still remained, *Conquêtes et Victoires des Français.*

The Emperor, holding the mutilated volume in his hand, turned to his guide. "This volume," he said, "was written to feed the flame of patriotism in the hearts of my people, and not to supply heat for the worn-out body of a bookstall man. Far better to make it possible for him to sell it than that he be obliged to burn it."

The collection of book trays and stalls along the different quays may look alike to the casual observer, but each has an individuality (less marked now than formerly) that is as distinct as the personalities of the bookstall men themselves. The Quai Voltaire used to be the aristocratic zone, but only the oldest of the *bouquinistes* would claim this distinction now. I always fancy the Quai Voltaire, for it was here that I had my earliest adventure. After an hour's search through trays which were overloaded with junk, I came upon a large quarto volume of *Don Quixote* in French, containing Pisan's engravings of Gustave Doré's wonderful illustrations. It was printed in Paris in 1863 on superb French rag paper, the typography showing great care and skill, and the presswork is of fine, even color. The

1860's were not years famous for bookmaking excellence in other parts of the world, but in France the standard established by the Didots still obtained.

Then the joy of my discovery was diminished. The volume I had found proved to be the second of a two-volume edition, and the first volume was conspicuous by its absence. The bookstall man was as surprised as I, and he overturned his entire stock in his search. At last an idea came to him.

"I may have it in my storeroom," he announced thoughtfully. " There is another volume there exactly like this, but I left it behind because I thought it was a duplicate. If I show two books of the same title I have to make a lower price. Will monsieur come again in the morning, and we shall see what we shall see."

On the following day I was at the quay before the stalls opened up for business. After half an hour's wait my man appeared, carrying a large bundle wrapped in newspapers, with a smile on his face which announced success.

"I have it," he declared happily. "I have the first volume here."

He laboriously untied the string, carefully folded up the newspapers for future use, and placed the book triumphantly before me.

"It was a natural mistake, was it not?" he asked. "Who could know that one great volume the size of this should not contain all a writer had to say on any subject? But here it is, and you shall have both."

I was too pleased to think of haggling over the price he asked, but no doubt I might have made the purchase

for half the sum. He confided to me, as he wrapped the two volumes in the newspapers he had so carefully preserved, that in a way he was glad to be rid of the books, for they took up too much room on his stall!

There was once a time when one might count on seeing the same faces peering day by day into the wooden trays, lifting one by one the various volumes, each eagerly searching for rarities in his own special subject. Some of these faithful ones are even now remembered by name. One of these, already mentioned, was Paul Lacroix, "Bibliophile Jacob." His specialty was romances of the eighteenth century and of the Imperial period, but while he sought books he absorbed the physiology and psychology of the bookstall men, embodying his reflections in a small volume entitled *Ma République*. "In personal appearance," writes Bibliophile Jacob, "the bookstall man partakes of the condition of his books — exposed to all the vicissitudes of the weather, sprouted and shriveled in the sun, beaten and dried by the wind, spotted and discolored by the rain. . . . The only *Manuel de Libraire* studied is the physiognomy of the purchaser: one smiles, another sighs, another knits his brows, another bites his lips; a fifth, more troubled, will finger twenty volumes before he sets his hand on the book he desires; and all betray themselves in some way which does not escape the bookstall man, who is as acute and astute as an English ambassador."

I have never found a real Aldine on the quays (by this I mean one printed by Aldus Manutius), but I have secured several excellent examples of later issues from

the Aldine Press. After the death of Aldus in 1515, the Press (to which had been added the plant of Nicolas Jenson) was continued by Aldus' father-in-law, Andrea de Torresani, Andrea's two sons, Francesco and Ferderico, and, later, Paulus, Aldus' son. None of Aldus' successors was his equal, but the encouragement and assistance that came to the Press through the patronage of Jean Grolier,[1] Treasurer of the Duchy of Milan under Louis XII, resulted in volumes which compare well with the typographical products of the period.

The Quai des Grands Augustins is supposed to be the most democratic — where highbrows and lowbrows rub shoulders without disdain, each confidently deceiving himself into believing that he will find that for which he seeks. It was here that I found one of these Aldine volumes[2] which is of much interest aside from its physical appearance. It was printed in 1564, all in that same Italic type in which the epoch-making *Virgil* was set,[3] with folios only on the odd pages. At the end is an early index, set up much as a modern printer would arrange it, but with the entries, of course, indexed under their given names rather than under the family cognomen. It contains intimate letters exchanged between famous men of the period, such as Marc Antonio Colonna, Pope Clement VII, the Duke of Urbino, various Doges of Venice, and Michelangelo. Throughout the volume the signatures of two writers are laboriously erased, — first by scratching with a knife and then obliterated by ink, — showing that some early censor has carefully stricken out offending

[1] See p. 191. [2] See Plate on opp. page. [3] See p. 16.

così toſto, non è ancor' arriuata, ma non può hormai tardar molto. così piaccia a Dio, che habbiate da ſeruiruene per quella occaſione, che parimente ci auguriamo, & deſideriamo l'un' & l'altro di noi. Deſidero intendere come ſete ſtato dopo la mia partita, dubitando, che queſto così fiero, & inopinato accidente non ui habbia alterato l'animo, et il corpo inſieme. Harò anche caro, mi auiſiate, ſe hauete dapoi hauuto nuoua alcuna del noſtro da ben Mons. Beccadello, & doue ſi truoua, & che diſegno faceua de' caſi ſuoi. & con queſto facendo fine, a uoi di tutto cuore mi offero, & raccomando, pregandoui a ſalutar' in mio nome la mia gentiliſſima comare, & baciar' il figlioccio nell'occhio diritto. Di Padoua. A gli XI. *di Maggio. del* LV.

Voſtro amoreuole fratello, & [redacted]

A M. PAOLO MANVTIO.

HAVENDOMI *Meſſer Marc' Antonio Paſſero ſpeſſe uolte moſtrato nelle lettere di V. Sig. quelle parti, che toccano a mio fauore, et a uoſtro nome donatomi queſti giorni a dietro due belliſſimi libri; ſpinſe l'animo mio già gran tempo, ſuegliato dalla fama delle uoſtre rare qualità, ad eſſerui per ſempre deuoto, & affettionato. però di ciò non ne ho mai fatto ſegno particolare con inchioſtro: perche i mi daua a credere, che non foſſe bene ſcriuer lettere in tutto uote d'argomento, a perſona ſempre occupa-*

ta

ALDINE TYPOGRAPHY

An interesting example of early bookmaking and of the XVI-century censor's exercise of his function.
(*From* Lettere Volgari. *Venice*, 1564.)

names. The book seems to be in its original vellum binding, but the leaves are trimmed down, sometimes almost bleeding into the folios. Many of the issues of the Aldine Press were sold in sheets, each purchaser binding to suit his own taste, so in this case perhaps the responsibility rests upon some careless original binder.

When the *bouquiniste* becomes friendly he becomes talkative. He grumbles over the decline in customers, and loves to remind you of the good old days, and to recall traditional book hunters who have enriched the bookstall men. Boulard was one of these, in the early nineteenth century — "Boulard, the old notary, whose face and memory are unforgettable," writes Uzanne. "He bought books by the meter, by the toise, by the acre. He bought in detail, *en bloc*, by the basket, by the heap; his drawing rooms, his vestibules, his lumber rooms, his stairs, his bedrooms, his cupboards bent under the weight of his volumes." And there was Chantelauze, who sought copies of Didot's classics; and Champfleury, who specialized in engravings; and Feuillet de Conches, whose passion was for autographs. Fine figures all, and most popular with the *bouquinistes*.

The stalls on the Quai de Conti used to claim to be of higher rank than the others because of the literary quality of the *bouquins* exposed for sale. I have discovered as much rubbish here as elsewhere, but one book I found was of peculiar personal interest. This was a copy of *Seneca's Morals*, printed in London in 1711, for Jacob Tonson. There were three Tonsons who were publishers, but this is the one with whom

Dryden had a private feud, caricaturing him with these indignant and irritating words:

With leering look, bull-faced, and freckled face,
With two left legs, with Judas-colored hair,
And frowsy pores, that taint the ambient air.

It so happened that this was the first book published by Harper and Brothers in New York when they began business in 1817. When the Harpers celebrated their hundredth anniversary in 1917 they asked me to reprint this volume in a Centennial Edition, inserting facsimiles of the original title and text pages as illustrations, but making the *format* conform to the best typographical standards of the twentieth century. A comparison of the title pages of the three editions, each one separated by a hundred years, is interesting as illustrative of the taste of the three periods.

Frankly, I like the 1711 title page better than the 1817 or the one I designed for the Harpers in 1917. The wording on all three is practically identical, yet how vastly different is the effect gained by the arrangement! The earliest example, in spite of the poor workmanship, was laid out by some one who knew types, and undoubtedly secured exactly the effect he sought. The multiplicity of type sizes, the mixture of capitals and lower-case letters, the definite attempt to cover the whole page, are practices of typography that are frowned on now, but in 1711 it was the thing to do. And the gaping angles of the rules are equally significant of the times. The 1817 title seems to me to be neither one thing nor the other — and therefore quite

typical of the absence of typographical standards in the early nineteenth century. My own title of 1917 is, I believe, in keeping with the severe text pages I was forced to adopt in order to keep the reprinted edition line for line and page for page with the 1817 volume; but somehow there is a charm about the 1711 model which both the others lack. In the eighteenth century there was no attempt to keep the design of the title page in harmony with the typography of the text — a decided convenience to the maker of the book under some circumstances!

After speaking as I have of the charm of the 1711 model, it is a fair question to ask why this style should have been abandoned. The answer is, because it is not based upon sound typographic precedent. We have outgrown the age of hand work. The modern printer, were he to adopt the style of the 1711 title page, would square the rules and miter the corners — and the charm would be gone! The use of the title page for descriptive purposes has been abandoned — it has become the door to the house, and can no longer be overloaded with type or decoration. It must be the motivation for the type pages that are to follow. The present tendency is to employ as few sizes of type upon a title page as possible (Bernard Shaw would never use but one!), and thus approach the effect of the Greek and Roman tablets — the most magnificent examples of lettering in the world.

Another name that will ever be held in grateful memory by the *bouquinistes* is that of Xavier Marmier. He was perhaps the most famous character who frequented

SENECA's

MORALS

By way of

ABSTRACT.

To which is added,

A DISCOURSE under the Title of

An After-Thought.

BY

Sir *ROGER L'ESTRANGE*, Knt.

The TENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for *Jacob Tonson*, at *Shakespear's Head* over-against *Catherine Street* in the *Strand*. MDCCXI.

TITLE PAGES AS MIRRORS OF STYLE

Compare this title page with the two that follow. The wording is identical but the typographical treatment represents the styles of three centuries. This, of the XVIII century, is characteristic in the multiplicity of type sizes, the mixture of capitals and lower-case letters, and in covering the whole page.

SENECA'S MORALS.

BY WAY OF ABSTRACT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A DISCOURSE,

UNDER THE TITLE OF

AN AFTER-THOUGHT.

BY SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE, KNT.

FIFTH AMERICAN EDITION.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY EVERT DUYCKINCK,
NO. 68 WATER-STREET.
J. & J. Harper, printers.
.....
1817.

The title above is neither one thing nor the other, which was characteristic of the XIX century. The title on the facing page, set in lower-case with a blocked mass in the center, represents a style prevalent in the XX century.

Seneca's Morals

By way of abstract to which is added a Discourse under the title of an After-thought by Sir *Roger* L'E*strange*, Knt.

Centennial Edition

Harper & Brothers, Publishers
New York and London
mdccccxvii

the quays during the latter part of the last century. He specialized in volumes in foreign languages, particularly folklore, and his passion for book hunting was such that he designed a special costume to wear during the chase. In this the pockets were large and deep so that he could stow away his purchases with the greatest ease. So completely did he clear the stalls of the books in which he was interested that such volumes came to be called "Marmiers" among the bookstall men. They had him to thank for many thoughtful acts and benevolences, the crowning tribute of his friendship being a clause in his will which read as follows:

"In remembrance of the happy moments I have passed among the bookstall keepers on the quays on the left bank, — moments which I reckon among the pleasantest in my life, — I leave to these worthy stall keepers a sum of 1,000 francs. I desire that this amount shall be expended . . . in paying for a jolly dinner, and in spending an hour in conviviality and in thinking of me. This will be acknowledgment for the many hours I have lived intellectually in my almost daily walks on the quays between the Pont Royal and the Pont Saint-Michel."

I have been particularly fortunate in stumbling upon Elzevirs[1] at the stalls on the various quays. I have had no illusions regarding them. I learned years ago that from a bibliographical standpoint an Elzevir was almost valueless unless the title and the date were "right"; but I love a book for its significance rather than for its sale price. Two are of particular typographic

[1] See also p. 37.

interest, aside from their imprint. The *Works of the Emperor Constantine*, edited by Meursius, was printed by Isaac Elzevir in 1617, and is set in double column in Greek and Latin text. The Greek type is based on that designed by Granjon for Christophe Plantin about 1550, which, in turn, was based upon the beautiful Royal Greeks of Robert Étienne. The handling of these two texts side by side, over-running and adapting as required when the Greek occupies more space than the Latin,[1] is most skilful, and shows a consummate knowledge of typographic precedent. No printer today, with the added experience of three hundred years, could surpass it. I was pleased to find this volume, regardless of its bibliographical value, because I was eager to own an example of Isaac Elzevir's work. It was he who introduced the diminutive *format*, later carried to its best by Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevir, which first attracted the attention of booklovers to this famous family of bookbuilders.

A most charming edition of *La Metamorphose d'Ovide*[2] fell into my hands on the Quai de Conti. It was printed by Jan de Tournes at Lyons, in 1564. This was the period when supremacy in printing rested in Antwerp, and Christophe Plantin was the master printer of the world; yet this less-known Lyonnese printer produced a volume which might well challenge comparison. The typography is delicate, as is appropriate to the subject, and each verse is illustrated by a copper-plate etching, all enclosed in a series of delightful borders, varying in design yet harmonious in

[1] See Plate on opp. page. [2] See Plate on p. 101.

Σκλάβων διαγέκτῳ ἐρμηνεύεται, τουτέστι, οἱ τὴν πολλὴν χώραν κατέχοντες. οἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ χρωβάτοι εἰς τὴν βασιλέα τῶν ῥωμαίων ἡράκλειον πρόσφυγες παρεγένοντο πρὸ τοῦ τοὺς Σέρβλους προσφυγεῖν εἰς τὴν αὐτὸν βασιλέα ἡράκλειον, κατὰ τὴν καιρὸν ὃν οἱ Ἄβαρεις πολεμήσαντες ἀπ' ἐκεῖσε τοὺς ῥωμάνους ἐναπεδίωξαν. οὓς ὁ βασιλεὺς διοκλητιανὸς ἀπὸ ῥώμης ἀγαγὼν ἐκεῖσε κατεσκήνωσε, διὸ καὶ ῥωμάνοι ἐκλήθησαν διὰ τὸ ἀπὸ ῥώμης μετοίκους αὐτοὺς γενέσθαι ἐν τῇ τοιαύταις χώραις, ἤγουν τῆς νῦν καλουμένης χρωβατίας καὶ Σερβλίας. παρὰ δὲ τῶν Ἀβάρων ἐκδιωχθέντες οἱ αὐτοὶ ῥωμάνοι ἐν τῇ ἡμέραις τοῦ αὐτοῦ βασιλέως ῥωμαίων ἡρακλείου, αἱ τούτων ἔρημοι καθεστήκασι χώραι. προστάξει οὖν τοῦ βασιλέως ἡρακλείου οἱ αὐτοὶ χρωβάτοι καταπολεμήσαντες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκεῖσε τοὺς Ἀβάρους ἐκδιώξαντες, ἡρακλείου τοῦ βασιλέως κελεύσει ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ τῶν Ἀβάρων χώρᾳ, εἰς ἣν νῦν οἰκοῦσι, κατεσκήνωσε. εἶχον δὲ οἱ αὐτοὶ χρωβάτοι τῷ τότε καιρῷ ἄρχοντα τὴν πατέρα τοῦ ποργά. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἡράκλειος ἀποστείλας καὶ ἀπὸ ῥώμης ἀγαγὼν ἱερεῖς, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ποιήσας ἀρχιεπίσκοπον, καὶ πρεσβυτέρους, καὶ διακόνους, τοὺς χρωβάτους ἐβάπτισε. εἶχον δὲ τῷ τότε καιρῷ οἱ χρωβάτοι ἄρχοντα τὴν ποργά. ὅτι ἡ τοιαύτη χώρα εἰς ἣν οἱ χρωβάτοι κατεσκηνώθησε ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑπὸ τῶν

rum; id est: terram multam possidentes. Atque hi ipsi Chrobati ad Romanorum imperatorem Heraclium confugerant ante Serblos, quo tempore Abares armis inde Romanos eiecerant; quos Româ adductos Diocletianus imperator illic habitare fecerat, vnde & Romani dicti sunt, quod Româ venientes sedes posuissent in illis regionibus, nempe Chrobatiâ & Serbliâ. Pulsis verò ijs ab Abaribus in dieb. eiusdem imperatoris Heraclij, desolata eorum regio iacuit, quapropter eius iussu ijdem Chrobati armis arreptis Abares ex illis locis expulerunt, & in ipsorum terra, quam etiam hodie tenent, sedes collocarunt. Erat autem illis tũc temporis princeps Porgæ pater, Heracliusque imperator Româ per legatum sacerdotibus accersitis, cõstitutoque ex ipsis archiepiscopo, presbyteris, & diaconis, Chrobatos baptizauit. Et tunc quidem principem habebant Porgam. Terra verò hæc quam incoluerunt Chrobati, ab initio sub potestate erat Ro-

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INGENIOUS TYPOGRAPHY OF THE XVII CENTURY

The Greek type in this page is based upon that cut by Grandjon for Christophe Plantin in 1550, which in turn was based upon the beautiful Royal Greeks of Robert Étienne. Note the skill of this early typographer in making the Greek text, which occupies more space, fit around the Latin. Also note the excessive number of hyphens in the Latin!

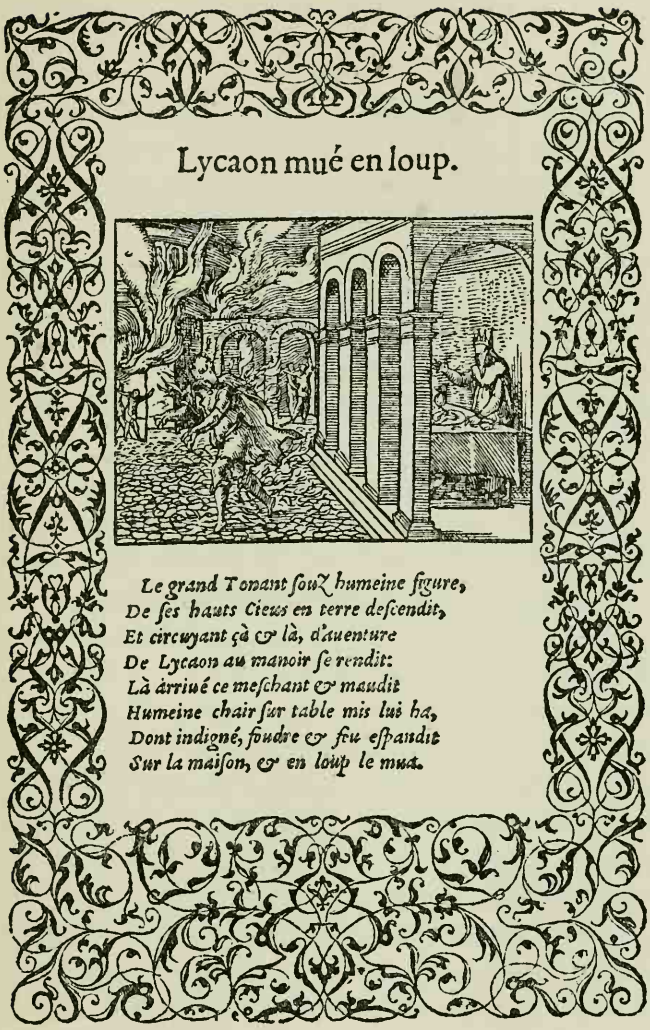
(From Works of the Emperor Constantine. *Printed in Amsterdam in* 1617 *by Isaac Elzevir. Found by the Author on a Stall on the Quai de Conti, Paris. Exact size.)*

their entirety. The printing is on thin French laid rag paper. My copy has a full red morocco binding, elaborately hand-tooled, and the little volume is held together by two leather clasps, tipped with designed bronze bosses. I bless the binder for his restraint in trimming the leaves so little in the rebinding!

The Quai Voltaire contributed still further to my collection in a copy of Owens' *Epigrammatum*,[1] printed by Louis Elzevir III in 1647. I like it the best of my Elzevirs. The text, consisting of short paragraphs, offers a real test of the typographer's skill which has here been abundantly demonstrated; the copper-plate title and frontispiece combine perfectly with the type and the display initials; and the binding is in the original silk-covered boards, hand stamped with restraint and charm. The paper is of better grade than in most of the Elzevir volumes, but the poor quality of the ink — which mars so many of these books — prevents the presswork from being what it should.

My most recent *bouquinistic* acquisition also came from the Quai Voltaire, in 1924. I had just made a pilgrimage to the Plantin shrine[2] at Antwerp, and reached Paris with the various exhibits freshly in mind. In the Second Drawing Room of the Museum, I had been attracted by a deed, dated November 27, 1630, by which Rubens conveyed to Balthazar Moretus I, Christophe Plantin's son-in-law and successor, for the sum of 4920 florins, 328 copies of the works of Herbertius Goltzius, printed in four volumes by Jacobus Biaeus at Antwerp in 1617. It seems that Balthazar

[1] See Plate on p. 39. [2] See Chapter VII.



THE MASTERPIECE OF JAN DE TOURNES

A charming edition, with delicate typography in keeping with the subject, combined with copper-plate illustrations, and with decorative borders varying in design yet harmonious in their combination. The weight of the line is kept uniform throughout.

(From La Metamorphose d'Ovide. *Lyons*, 1564. *Found by the Author on a Stall on the Quai de Conti, Paris. Exact size.)*

bought these sheets with the idea of making a fifth volume to include Goltzius' *History of the Roman Emperors*, enriching the text with medallions cut on wood by Christophe Jegher. The original blocks, 160 in number, for which the printer paid six florins each, I had examined in the Room of Wood Engravings. The first four volumes were brought up to date by printing new titles and prefaces, using the sheets already printed by Biaeus for the text. Beautiful copper-plate titles were designed, two by Rubens himself,[1] and the five volumes were issued as a complete set in 1644–1645 — four old volumes with new front matter, and one new volume with medallions printed in black on a brown background, and at the end the famous Plantin mark.

Once in Paris, I found myself again browsing among the *bouquins* on the second-hand bookstalls on the Quai Voltaire. It seemed as if the percentage of rubbish had increased more than ever since my previous visit — when suddenly I discovered five quarto volumes, bound in the original vellum, almost hidden among the worthless clutter. Opening the top volume, I was amazed to find myself looking at the black and brown medallion of the Emperor Fredericus IV, of the series I had so recently seen at the Plantin-Moretus Museum! A further examination disclosed the complete set in perfect condition — one of the 328 copies in the manufacture of which Peter Paul Rubens, famous artist, and Balthazar Moretus, famous printer, had collaborated.

These are a few of the interesting items for which I

[1] See Plate on p. 107.

BALTHAZAR MORETUS I

The son-in-law and successor of Christophe Plantin.

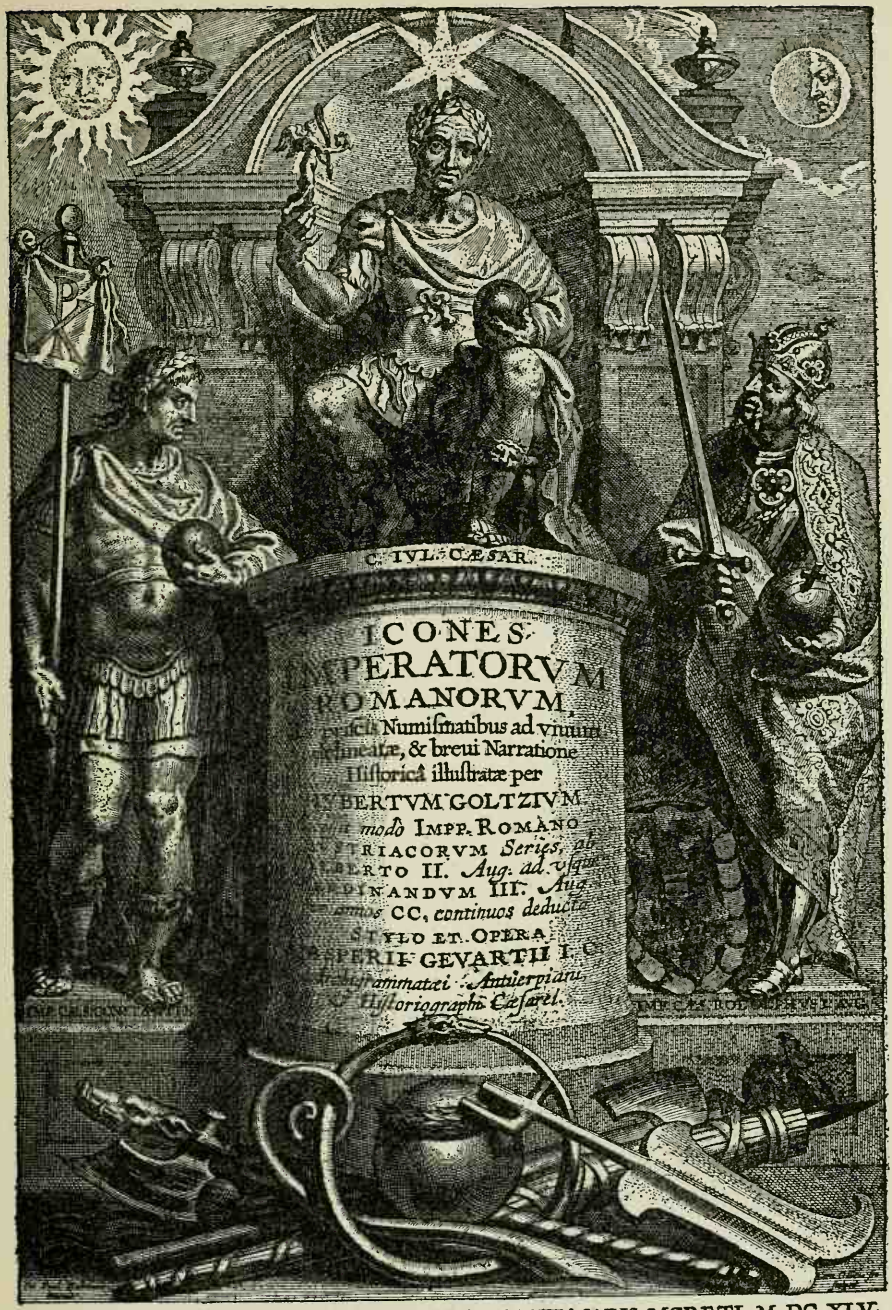
(From old Engraving by E. Quellinius.)

hold the *bouquinistes* in grateful memory. They are not of extraordinary value when compared with Aldus' *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, which Nordier boasted of picking up for six sous; but such bargains will never again be found on the quays. The booksellers of Paris have long since learned how to cull the stock of the bookstall man in advance of its appearance in the trays, and their superior knowledge of real values stands them in good stead. Still, even though what I call my "treasures" from the quays are not necessarily those which would fetch the highest prices in the auction room, they have served their full purpose in that they give me continuing pleasure. In these days of limited housing space, I feel that one should ask himself why a new book or an old one should be added to his library rather than why it should not. A beautiful piece of furniture, a fine painting, a book — each expresses its own message in its own way; but that message cannot be intelligible to the receiver if coveted and secured simply for the love of acquisition.

As a matter of fact, there is a good deal of sentimentality about books that borders on the maudlin. I agree with Augustine Birrell when he says, "Book hunting is a respectable pursuit, an agreeable pastime, an aid to study — but so are many other pastimes and pursuits. Well it would be if historians of book hunting caught but a little of the graceful simplicity and sincerity of an Isaac Walton or a Gilbert White. But no! for the most part these historians are masses of affectation, boasters of bargains, retailers of prices, never touching the heart or refining the fancy. . . .

Sham raptures over rare volumes, and bombastic accounts of by-gone auctions, have never helped to swell the ranks of the noble army of book hunters."

Except for Père Dodeman no modern vender has appeared to take the place of Père Rosez, or Père Malerey, or Père Debas. No more may one pick up the first letter from Amerigo Vespucci to Lorenzo de' Medici, or an Elzevir *Molière* for a few sous; or discover choice Aldines, or Caxtons, or Étiennes, or Baskervilles for the price of a magazine. Yet the remote chance of an occasional treasure amidst the rubbish keeps alive the vigor of the chase. It was not so long ago that Gabriel Hanotaux might have been seen frequenting the quays in his search for material bearing upon the great Richelieu, whose life he was engaged in writing; or François Coppée, searching for a human note to catch and fix for all eternity. Chance passers-by are attracted to the stalls by curiosity, and may find some volume that happens to appeal. A few real book-lovers, and a few only, still remain obsessed by their bibliomania, and continue to haunt the *boutiques*, stimulated by the atmosphere of the quays, pretending to themselves that they still expect to find the unexpected. Of such is the soul of the slave of the book!



ANTVERPIÆ, EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA BALTHASARIS MORETI. M.DC.XLV.

A RUBENS TITLE PAGE

When Rubens sold the sheets of Goltzius' Works, printed by Biaeus, to Balthazar Moretus, he agreed to design two title pages for the new edition. One of these is shown above, etched on copper.

(Found by the Author on a Stall on the Quai Voltaire in Paris.
$12\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ *inches.)*

CHAPTER IV

Books in the Cradle

IV

BOOKS IN THE CRADLE

A GOOD many years ago a friend came to my house at a time when I was still exuberant over a recent find in a second-hand bookstore in Rome, and I proudly — too proudly, I fear — exhibited the volume for his admiration.

"This," I said, probably with more emphasis than I realized, "was printed by Nicolas Jenson in Venice in 1475. It is my first *incunabulum*."

He was courteous enough to listen attentively to all I said, and examined the book with seeming interest; but I could not help feeling that he failed to appreciate the full importance of the event.

The following day my friend sent me a note: "After leaving your house last evening," it ran, "I whispered cautiously to my wife, 'Do you know what an *incunabulum* is?' To my infinite relief she acknowledged her own ignorance. As soon as we reached home, we resorted to the dictionary: 'Incunabula, from the Latin words *in* and *cunabula* meaning "in the cradle" (infancy) of the art of printing. Applied to all volumes printed before the end of the year 1500.' We turned to each other, thrilled by the pride of intellectual acquisition. Then we went upstairs and looked down upon our offspring, sleeping in his *cunabulum*, and — understood."

I had not meant to be pedantic. If my friend had seen fit to discourse upon the subject of electricity, in which he was an expert, he would have found my enthusiasm even less intelligent than his own expression over books; for such is the defensive reaction to conceal our lack of knowledge. My only excuse for assuming that his horizon was broader than mine was that books are more intimate things than watts and more personal than amperes.

As I look back now upon this particular experience I must admit that I did not give my friend even half a chance. I had forgotten how forbidding the word *incunabula* had sounded to me before it automatically changed itself into the more inviting "cradle books," and opened up before me, with alluring prospects, a new adventure. Even after acquiring my Jenson, *incunabula* as a species did not begin to have the significance for me which they afterward assumed. When I began to explore this hitherto unknown field I found myself in the position of the child, to whom at first everything is strange; but I had the advantage of maturity in gaining deeper satisfaction because of the greater understanding that is the compensation of the years. The child asks searching questions regarding events and surroundings which are commonplace to his elders, and in the enlightenment that comes with the unfolding knowledge, receives thrills unimagined by his instructor. By the same token, I stood before the unfamiliar asking myself questions which I quickly found could be answered only by personal investigation. The main road I started to explore was intersected by many

bypaths, and the rewards gained by departures from the beaten track proved so rich that the quest lured me on and on.

From the very beginning I have approached the cradle books as human documents rather than as bibliographical or typographical exhibits. At first, in my inexperience, I must admit that I was a bit skeptical in accepting the generally accredited fact that the volumes of the fifteenth century had never been surpassed in taste or workmanship by later printers. This seemed incredible when I considered the tremendous improvements in mechanical equipment; but the evidence was overwhelming. The master bookbuilders of the fifteenth century, handicapped as they were by the limitations of a new-born art, established a standard which has ever remained the objective of their successors.

Then came the natural query, "How did they do it?" It could not just have happened. What were the obstacles those intrepid pioneers were forced to overcome? What were the economic, political, and ecclesiastical conditions under which these volumes were produced? What influences brought them into being, and what influence did they themselves exert? If I could discover the answers to these questions how much more these books would really mean to me! From that moment all that was austere or forbidding in the word *incunabula* vanished. In it I now saw an invitation to explore the mysteries of that extraordinary period during which the Dark Ages slipped into the background, medievalism became forgotten, and the glories of the Renaissance began to beckon.

My first experiences were a bit bewildering. During the last half of the fifteenth century no less than 212 towns and cities in Europe had well-established Presses, and the number of titles and reprints issued exceeds 36,000. Of this tremendous number it was obvious that only a small percentage could really be classified as the product of an art, but I was deeply impressed by the fact that the physical side of book-building proved an attraction to so many. This, in itself, gave me a striking commentary on the times, and surrounded even the inferior examples with a definite significance. These volumes, printed in different countries by different printers under untried conditions, seemed to me nothing less than a declaration of independence on the part of a world eager and determined to secure knowledge. No longer was learning to be confined to the fortunate few who could pay the excessive cost of the handwritten volumes, laboriously produced and limited in number; no longer could the wealthy princes presume to hold their political power through the ignorance of the masses. These first printed books, by supplying information concerning spiritual and material things, opened the door to a world until then forbidden, and marked the turning point in history by giving the people a powerful weapon with which to fight against bigotry and oppression. They were not merely examples of the art of printing, but were rather mirrors in which were reflected the true beginnings of modern civilization.

My next step was to persuade these cradle books to take me into their confidence. A talkative book always

appeals to me! I asked them to reveal why the Bible was the first volume printed in Germany, why the Latin classics supplied the text for so many of the earliest Italian publications, why, in England, the first book printed should have been an historical romance. However much a maker of books might consider printing as an art, he would naturally look upon his labor as a livelihood, and, in selecting the titles of his publications, he must have had an eye to what his prospective clients would care to buy.

So, thanks to the friendly volumes, I found myself in Germany — at Mainz, with John Gutenberg and Fust and Schoeffer. The *Gutenberg Bible* passed out of the atmosphere of the auction room and became a human document. Albrecht Pfister in Bamberg produced ponderous tomes (printed, by the way, in the same type used in the *Thirty-Six Line Bible*). In Strassburg, John Mentelin issued equally heavy literature, which could appeal only to the most highly developed, scholarly minds. In Cologne, Ulrich Zell was devoting himself to the lesser treatises on theology, for which he found a market among the priests (but perhaps his greatest fame comes from his testimony that Gutenberg was the inventor of printing, in the *Cologne Chronicle* of 1499). Rivals of Zell in Cologne were Arnold Ther Hoernen, who was the first to use a title page; and John Koelhoff, the earliest printer to place "signature marks" on his printed sheets to aid the binder in collating the folded leaves. In 1468, Günther Zainer issued some Latin *Meditations* on the life of Christ, in Augsburg, which city had already become famous

for woodcuts of the Saints; Koberger added to the list of ecclesiastical publications by the numerous volumes he published in Nuremberg — and so it went. A heavy enough list, in all consciousness! In the ecclesiastical group, the Bible naturally held first position in popularity. Then came Missals, Psalters, Antiphonaries, and Church service books. Akin to these were the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Jerome, and particularly Saint Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and the *Imitatione* of Thomas à Kempis. All these were printed in Latin, which was the language universally understood by those who were able to read.

An absurd story, which should be classed among the legends but is of interest in emphasizing the "best seller" of the period, is that of Doctor Faustus and the Devil, Faustus being John Fust of the famous early printing house of Fust and Schoeffer, Gutenberg's associates and successors. It is alleged that before the discovery of the art of printing became known in France Doctor Faustus took to Paris a number of Bibles which he and Schoeffer had printed, and offered them for sale as manuscript volumes at 60 crowns each, which was the full price charged for a handwritten Bible. Later he reduced the price to 30 crowns, which caused universal astonishment; but when at last he came down to 20 crowns a volume, and produced the books in rapid succession, all Paris became agitated. The uniformity of the copies only increased the wonder and alarm of the people, as it seemed to them to be beyond the power of human invention. Information was given to the authorities charging Fust with being a magician.

An dicet aliquis ista falsa eē miracula: nec fuisse facta sz m̄dacit er scripta? Quisquis hoc dicit: si de his reb⁹ negat oīo ull' lr̄is eē credēdū: pōt ēt dicē: nec d̄os ullos curaī mortalia. Non enim se aliter colendos esse persuaserunt: nisi mirabl̄ibus operuz effectibus: quorum ⁊ historia gentiuz testis est: quaꝝ dij se ostentare mirabiles: potius q̄ utiles oñdere potuerꝝt. Uñ hoc opere nr̄o: cuius hunc iā decimum librum habemus in manibus: ñ eos suscepimus refellendos: qui uel ullā esse uim diuinam negant: uel humana non curare contendūt: sz eos q̄ nr̄o deo conditori sancte ⁊ gloriosissime ciuitatis deos suos preferūt: nescientes eum esse ipsum etiam mūdi huius uisibilis ⁊ mutabilis inuisibilē ⁊ īcōmutabilem conditorem ⁊ uite beate: ñ de his que condidit: sed de seipso uerissimum largitorem. Eius enim ꝓpheta ueracissimus ait. Mihi autem adherere deo bonum est. De fine nāqꝫ boni inter philosophos querit̄: ad qd̄ adipiscendum omnia officia referēda sunt. Nec dixit iste: mihi autem nimis diuitijs abundare bonum est: aut insigniri purpura ⁊ sceptro: uel diadēate excellere: aut quod nonnulli etiaz phi l̄osophoꝝ dicē non erubuerunt: mihi voluptas corporis bonum ē: aut qd̄ melius uelut meliores dicere uisi sūt: mihi uirtus animi bonum est. Sz mihi inquit adherere deo bonū est. Hoc euz docuerat: cui uni tantūmmō sacrificandum: sancti quoqꝫ angeli legaliū sacrificiorum etiam contestatione monuerunt. Uñ ēt ip̄e sacrificiū eius fact⁹ fuerat: cuius igne intelligibili cōrept⁹ ardebat: ⁊ in eius ineffabilem incorporeūqꝫ complexum sancto desiderio ferebatur. Porro autem si multorū d̄orum cultores: qualescunqꝫ deos suos esse arbitrentur: ab eis facta esse miracula uel ciuilium rerum historie: uel libris magicis: siue quod honestius putant theurgicis credunt: quid cause ē cur illis litteris nolunt credere ista facta esse: quibus tāto maior debet̄ fides quanto sup om̄s est magnus: cui uni soli sacrificandum precipiunt.

Que ratio sit uisibilis sacrificij: q̄ uni uero ⁊ inuisibili deo offerri docet uera religio. cap. xix.

Qui autem putant hec uisibilia sacrificia dijs alijs congruere: illi uero anquam inuisibili inuisibilia ⁊ maiora maiori: melioriqꝫ meliora: qualia sunt pūre mentis ⁊ bone uolūtatis officia: profecto nesciunt hec ita esse signa illoruz: sicut uerba uel sonātia signa sunt rerum. Quocirca sicut orantes atqꝫ laudantes ad eum dirigimus significantes uoces: cui res ipsas in corde: quas significamus offerim⁹: ita sacrificantes non alteri uisibile sacrificium offerendum esse nouerimus: q̄ illi cuius in cordibus nostris inuisibile sacrificium nosipsi esse debemus. Tunc nobis fauent nobisqꝫ congaudent: atqꝫ ad hoc ipsum nos pro suis uiribus adiuuant angeli quiqꝫ uirtutesqꝫ superiores: ⁊ ipsa bonitate ac pietate potentiores. Si aūt illis hec exhibere voluerimus: non libenter accipiunt. ⁊ cum ad homines ita mittuntur ut eorum presentia sentiat̄ aptissime uetant: sunt de his exempla in lr̄is sāctis. Putauerunt quidam deferenduz angelis honorē uel adorando uel sacrificando qui debetur deo: ⁊ eorum sūt admonitione prohibiti: iussiqꝫ sūt hec ei deferre: cui uni fas esse nouerunt. Imitati sūt angelos sanctos ēt sancti hoies dei. Nam paulus ⁊ barnabas ī lycaonia facto quodam miraculo sanitatis putati sunt dij: eisqꝫ lycaonij immolare uictimas uoluerunt: quod a se humili pietate remouentes eis in

AN ECCLESIASTICAL BEST SELLER OF THE XV CENTURY

(From Augustinus: De Civitate Dei. *Printed by Jenson in Venice in* 1475. *Exact size.)*

His lodgings were searched and a large number of Bibles were found and seized. The red ink with which the volumes were embellished was said to be his blood, and he was adjudged as being in league with the Devil. The story goes that he was cast into prison, and, in order to save his life, he was obliged to make known the discovery of the art of printing. Walchius (1609) insists upon the accuracy of this story, citing as corroborative evidence the fact that Fust died in Paris of the plague in 1466.

I need no more data than these cradle books have already given me to form in my mind an accurate picture of the life and customs of the German nation during the last half of the fifteenth century. All over the world intelligent people were particularly concerned in scholastic theology, considering that their material welfare was absolutely wrapped up with the spiritual, and they sought to familiarize themselves with the various tenets as a vital part of their every-day life; but in other countries a leaven was introduced by reading the classics and even volumes upon secular subjects.

When, because of a wider market and easier access to original manuscripts, printing, as an art, passed from Germany to Italy, I was quite ready to go with it. Yet it was an ecclesiastical volume which first guided me to the new field — Lyra's *Expositiones librorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti*,[1] printed by Sweynheym and Pannartz at Rome in 1472. Could any title be more forbidding to the seeker of adventure! Somewhere I had learned that in this book I should find the famous petition

[1] See Plates on opp. page and at p. 120.

Io. An. Alerien̄ Episcopi. S. D. n. Pape Bibliothecarii.
ad Xystum. IIII. summum Pontificem Epistola.

DOmmunis ac trita olim inter gentiles opinio fuit pater beatissime Xyste. IIII. Pontifex Maxime cetera diis deos ipsos duodecim etiam illos principes selectos & magnos appellatos uni necessitati continuo paruisse. Eam enim inter numina omnia absq; ꝓuocatione imperiosū exercuisse magistratū. Id ne inter christianos quoq; uere dici censeatur tua potissimū sapientia clementiaq; occurri potest. & ut digneris miseri/corditer occurere seruuli tue sāctitatis Conradus Suueynhem & Arnoldus Pannartzs Impressores nostri ac utilissime huius fictorie artis primi in Italia opifices maximi in urbe operarii ante sanctissimos pedes tuos terram uestigiis tuis impressam deosculantes implorant: nanq; ego ipse creatura tua ceteras epistolas proprio: hanc illoꝝ nomine & decessoris antea & postmodū tuo numini diuino inscripsi. Vox quidem Impressoꝝ sub tanto iam cartharum fasce laborantium: & nisi tua liberalitas opitulet deficientiū ista est pater beatissime: Nos de Germaniis primi tanti commodi artem in Romanam Curiā tuā multo sudore & impensa decessoris tui tempestate deueximus. Nos opifices librarios ceteros ut idem auderent: exemplo nostro incitauimus. Nos reliquis propter impensaꝝ magnitudinem a tanto negotio uel omnino uel maxima ex parte quasi in salebra herentibus recētiore animo uiribusq; geminatis cū sūma difficultate restitimus. Iam tandem defecti neruis & sanguine diuinam opem tuam imploramus. Indicem si perlegeris Impressorum a nobis opeꝝ: miraberis tante maiestatis & apostolici culminis pater uel carthas huic librorū copie potuisse uel Linamenta sufficere. Et ut plegere ualeas usq; adeo curis pontificalibus districtus nihil aliud hec ad te epistola cōtinebit. Nam auditis nominibus tantorum autorum duntaxat facere non poteris: si bene tuā pietatem nouimus: quin statim nobis subuenias. nec ulla reꝝ qualiūcunq; occupatiōe difficultate ue ualebis deterreri. Impressi sunt nostro studio pater Beatissime libri qui in subiectis suo ordine tibi recensebuntur.

Donati pro puerulis ut inde principium dicendi sumamus: unde imprimendi initium sumpsimus: numero trecenti. CCC.
Lactantii firmiani Institutionū contra gentiles & reliquorum eius autoris opusculoꝝ uolumina octinginta uigintiquinq;. DCCC.XXv.
Epistolaꝝ familiarium Ciceronis uolumina qngenta quinq̄ginta. D.L.
Epistolaꝝ Ciceronis ad atticū uolumina ducēta septuagintaquinq;. CC.LXXV.
Speculi humane uite uolumina trecenta. CCC.
Diui Augustini de Ciuitate dei uolumina octingenta uigintiqnq;. DCCC.XXv.
Diui Hieronymi Epistolaꝝ & libelloꝝ uolumina mille centum. M.C.
M. Tul. Ciceronis de oratore cū ceteris uolumina qngenta qnq̄ginta. D.L.
M. Tul. Ciceronis opeꝝ omniū in philosophia uo. qngenta qnq̄ginta. D.L.
L. Apuleii platonici cū Alcinoo uolumina ducēta septuagītaqnq;. CC.LXXV.
A. Gelii noctium atticaꝝ uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq;. CC.LXXV.
C. Cesaris commentariorum gallici & ciuilium bellorum uolumina ducenta septua/gintaquinq;. CC.LXXV.
Defensionis diui platonis uolumina trecenta. CCC.
P. Virgilii Maronis opeꝝ omniū uolumina qngenta quinq̄ginta. D.L.
T. Liuii patauini cum Epitomate omnium decadum uolumina ducenta septuaginta/quinq;. CC.LXXV.

PETITION OF SWEYNHEYM AND PANNARTZ TO POPE SIXTUS IV

Giving a complete list of their titles and the number of copies printed of each edition at Subiaco and Rome. This list is of inestimable value in arriving at the probable average number of copies in the early editions.

(From Lyra: Expositiones librorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti. *Rome,* 1472. *Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.* $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ *inches.)*

made by the printers to Pope Sixtus IV, in which they recorded the titles they had printed and the number of copies in each issue. I was curious to check these in arriving at the average size of the early editions. I found the pages, and they served their purpose; but I also discovered in the volume much beyond that for which I sought. The book asserted its personality and took me with it to Subiaco. In 1464, Juan Turrecremata, the learned abbot of the monastery of Saint Scholastica, impressed by the importance of Gutenberg's marvelous discovery, succeeded in persuading Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz — two Germans who had learned the art of printing, perhaps in Gutenberg's office — to set up in the monastery the earliest printing establishment in Italy. So the religious nature of these Subiaco volumes was an echo from Germany! As the tale unfolded, I learned of the terrific obstacles encountered in this pioneer exploit, in a small town some thirty miles from Rome; of the heroic efforts of Father Juan (who later became a Cardinal) and the stout-hearted printers which actually bore fruit in the Subiaco publications of 1464–1467; and finally of the reluctant decision of Sweynheym and Pannartz to accept the invitation received from the brothers Massimi to transfer themselves to the Massimi Palace in Rome, where they hoped to pursue their labors amid more promising surroundings.

Then I was made a part of the continuing adventures of these pioneers in producing the earliest volumes printed in Rome, of which this uninviting title is one. The petition contains more than titles and

figures. In it is an appeal to Pope Sixtus to come to the aid of the new art by subsidizing the publications. "Our house," the printers declare, "rather large, is filled with printed sheets, but is empty of everything necessary to life"; and this list of titles, now of such supreme bibliographical value, was originally made to impress upon the Pontiff the importance of their efforts.

By this time Lyra's *Commentary* has become more than a rare volume, more than an example of printing. Its makers have assumed a real personality, and I find myself sympathizing with them in their disappointment when their petition fell upon deaf ears. I have almost forgotten my original purpose in examining it, and the gratification I found in its contributing evidence that the number of copies in those fifteenth-century editions was about five hundred. In those days, of course, all printing was done directly from the type, and an average page required perhaps ten pounds. Few printers owned type enough for even one entire volume, their procedure being to set as much as they could, print, distribute, and then set again as the work went on. If a second edition were required, this labor had to be repeated. All this would seem to show that unless a printer could sell at least five hundred copies of an edition he would hesitate to venture upon the undertaking, which, from the figures already mentioned, would seem a fair average. The Sweynheym and Pannartz titles actually average 445 to an edition.

As a result of the humanistic movement — that forerunner and essence of the Renaissance — it was natural

Strabonis Geographi uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
M. Annei Lucani uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
C. Plynii Veronensis de naturali historia uolumina trecenta. CCC.
C. Suetonii Tranquilli de duodecim Cesaribus uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
Diui Leonis Pape sermonum uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
M. Fabii Quintiliani institutionum oratoriarum uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
Continuti. i. Catbene auree diui Thome Aquinatis uolumina quingenta quinquaginta. D.L.
Diui Cypriani Epistolaꝝ uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
Biblie cum opusculo Aristee uolumina qngenta quinquaginta: D.L
Silii Italici cum. C. Calphurnio & Hesiodo uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
Orationum. M. Tul. Ciceronis cum Inuectiuis omnibus in Antonium. Verrem. Catilinã et ceteros uolumina ducenta septuagintaquinq. CC.LXXV.
P. Ouidii Nasonis Metamorphoseos & Elegiarum omnium uolumina quingenta quinquaginta. D.L.
Nicolai de Lyra uolumina Mille Centum. M.C.

Horum omnium uoluminũ summa ut tua pietas perspicit pater Beatissime nisi fallimur efficit codices duodecies mille quadringentos septuagintaquinq: aceruũ qdem ingentẽ & nobis Impressoribus cuis ad ferendum qua parte restat: intolerabilem: propter eam quã in initio epistole posueramus necessitatem. nã ingens supplus ad uictũ necessarius cessantibus emptoribus ferri ampliꝰ a nobis nequit. Et ementes non esse nullum est grauius testimonium q̃ ꝙ domus nostra satis magna plena est quinternionũ inanis rei necessariarum. In te igitur clementissime pater qui es sapientissimus doctissimusq: spes nostra sita ẽ in te subuenĩdi nostre necessitati est copiaꝝ ne pereamus. Da nobis subsidiũ de excelso throno maiestatis tue. pati sumus pro clementie tuo arbitrio de nostra merce id est de impressis quaternionibus nostris tibi tot tradere: quot uoluerit & qbus uoluerit. Tua incredibilis mãsuetudo subueniat nobis de aliquo officio unde possimus nos & nostros alere. Impẽsa est facta in soluꝰ Nicolai de Lyra a nobis uoluminibus tanta ut ampliꝰ nihil nobis supersit ad uiuendum. Si uenderemus opera nostra non solum a tua pietate nihil peteremus: Sed ultro in presentium temporum articulo in quo te plurium egere non nescimus: ipsi nostra offerremus. facietusq: quotiens tuo ædiumẽto fortuna nobiscum usa esse uidebitur fronte seremore. Interea pater sancte adiuuent nos miserationes tue: quia pauperes facti sumus nimis. Sis perpetuo sospes et felix pater Beatissime Rome. xx. Marci. M. CCCC. LXXII. Pontificatus tui Clementissimi Anno Primo.

PETITION OF SWEYNHEYM AND PANNARTZ TO POPE SIXTUS IV

This is the second page of the petition, and includes the famous line, "Our house, rather large, is filled with printed sheets but is empty of everything necessary to life."

(From Lyra: Expositiones librorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti. *Rome,* 1472. *Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.* $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ *inches.)*

that the early Italian printers should soon break away from ecclesiastical literature and select the classics as most likely to find a market. To the educated Italian of the fifteenth century they were as familiar as Dickens and Thackeray are to our generation. If not Virgil or Plato, at least Ovid's *De Arte Amandi et de Remedio Amoris*[1] was an integral part of every well educated household.

I find myself in Venice, where I might easily spend the rest of my natural life in listening to the stories told by the cradle books issued by no less than a hundred and fifty competing Presses! There is John of Spires, the earliest Venetian printer, who, but for his early death, might have saved historians much embarrassment; for he had secured from the Senate the exclusive right to print in Venice for five years. *Cicero*, *Pliny*, and *Saint Augustine* were his contributions. John's brother, Vindelin of Spires, succeeded to the business; but the monopoly ceased with John's death, and the names of the competing printers became legion. Nicolas Jenson promptly established himself in 1470, and achieved eternal fame by cutting a Roman type so beautiful and so basically correct that it has served as the model for the best type designs which have since been cut. There were Christopher Valdarfer, and Franz Renner, and Erhard Ratdolt, and the brothers Giovanni and Gregorio dei Gregorii, and that great master of them all, Aldus Manutius, with whom we are already well acquainted.[2] Some say that over four thousand titles owe their origin to Venice alone,

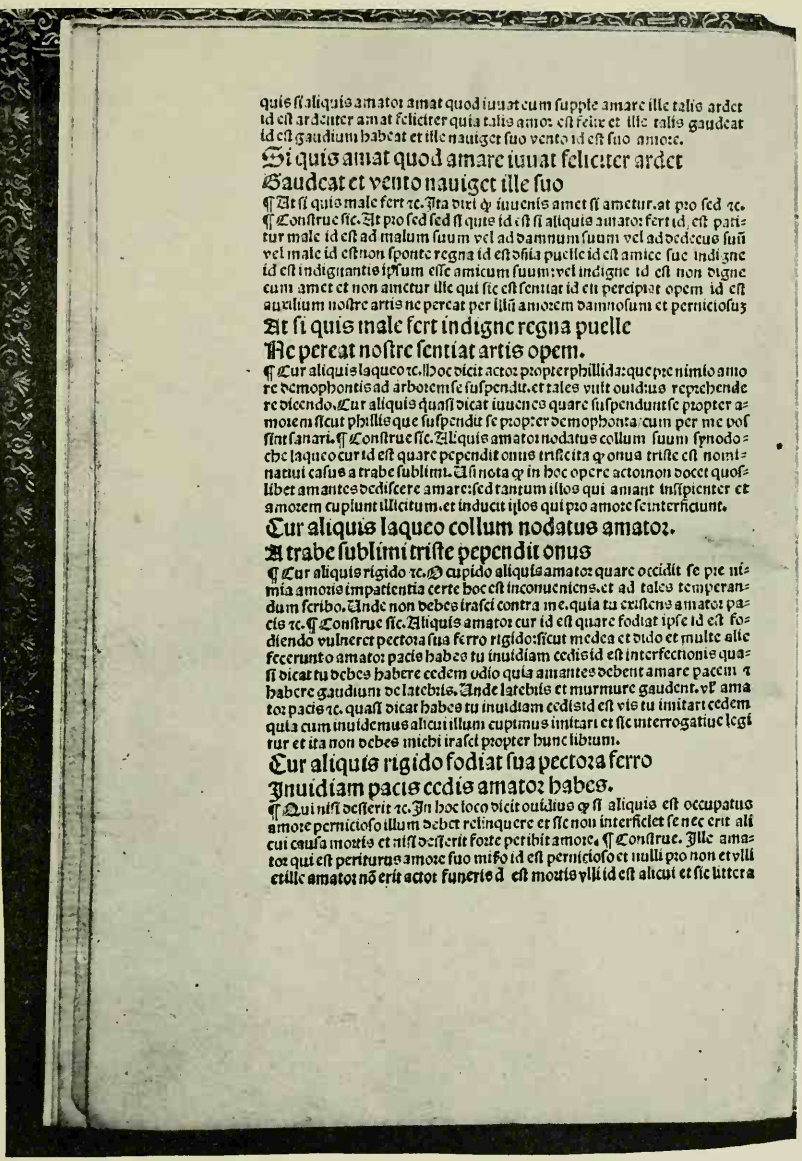
[1] See Plate at p. 122.

[2] See Plate on p. 5.

including every sort of literature that can be imagined. Ratdolt specialized in astronomy, mathematics, and history, but he is best known for his successful combination of type and decoration.

The Italian love for decoration encouraged the fifteenth-century printers in that country to enrich their volumes by adding illustrations, cut on wood. The introduction of woodcuts came earlier in Germany, but in connection with volumes so heavy and serious in subject as to preclude beauty or lightness of design. The popularity of the "profane" classics, and of other secular books in Italy, gave the Italian printers a splendid opportunity to combine the arts of printing and of woodcutting in a charming manner. These supply added information as to the taste, the customs, and the manners of the people of the period.

One of the most popular "romances" of the fifteenth century (which would never be suspected from its title!) was the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, —"Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream," — issued by Aldus Manutius from his Press in Venice in 1499. Undertaken at the expense of Leonardo Crasso, of Verona, who dedicated the book to Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, the book was written by a Dominican friar, Francesco Colonna. Since the volume was to have no title page, after the custom of the times, its author adopted the ingenious method of so arranging his chapters that the successive initial letters make up a sentence which, translated, reads, " Brother Francesco Colonna greatly loved Polia." In the opening chapter, Polia tells her nymphs that her real name was Lucretia, and, from this



quis si aliquis amator amat quod iuuat eum supple amare ille talis ardet
id est ardenter amat feliciter quia talis amor est felix et ille talis gaudeat
id est gaudium habeat et ille nauiget suo vento id est suo amore.

Si quis amat quod amare iuuat feliciter ardet
Gaudeat et vento nauiget ille suo

¶ At si quis male fert ꝛc. Ita dixi ꝙ iuuenis amet si ametur. at pro sed ꝛc.
¶ Construe sic. At pro sed sed si quis id est si aliquis amator fert id est pati-
tur male id est ad malum suum vel ad damnum suum vel ad dedecus suū
vel male id est non sponte regna id est dñia puelle id est amice sue indigne
id est indignantis ipsum esse amicum suum: vel indigne id est non digne
cum amet et non ametur ille qui sic est sentiat id est percipiat opem id est
auxilium nostre artis ne pereat per illū amorem damnosum et perniciosuz

At si quis male fert indigne regna puelle
Ne pereat nostre sentiat artis opem.

¶ Cur aliquis laqueo ꝛc. Hoc dicit actor propter phillida: que pre nimio amo
re demophontis ad arborem se suspendit. et tales vult ouidius reprehende
re dicendo. Cur aliquis quasi dicat iuuenes quare suspendunt se propter a-
morem sicut phillis que suspendit se propter demophonta: cum per me pos
sint sanari. ¶ Construe sic. Aliquis amator nodatus collum suum synodo-
che laqueo cur id est quare pependit onus triste ita ꝙ onus triste est nomi-
natiui casus a trabe sublimi. Usi nota ꝙ in hoc opere actor non docet quos-
libet amantes dediscere amare: sed tantum illos qui amant insipienter et
amorem cupiunt illicitum. et inducit illos qui pro amore se interficiunt.

Cur aliquis laqueo collum nodatus amator.
A trabe sublimi triste pependit onus

¶ Cur aliquis rigido ꝛc. O cupido aliquis amator quare occidit se pre ni-
mia amoris impatientia certe hoc est inconueniens. et ad tales temperan-
dum scribo. Unde non debes irasci contra me. quia tu existens amator pa-
cis ꝛc. ¶ Construe sic. Aliquis amator cur id est quare fodiat ipse id est fo-
diendo vulneret pectora sua ferro rigido: sicut medea et dido et multe alie
fecerunt o amator pacis habes tu inuidiam cedis id est interfectionis qua-
si dicat tu debes habere cedem odio quia amantes debent amare pacem ꝛ
habere gaudium de latebris. Unde latebris et murmure gaudent. vl' ama
tor pacis ꝛc. quasi dicat habes tu inuidiam cedis id est vis tu imitari cedem
quia cum inuidemus alicui illum cupimus imitari et sic interrogatiue legi
tur et ita non debes michi irasci propter hunc librum.

Cur aliquis rigido fodiat sua pectora ferro
Inuidiam pacis cedis amator habes.

¶ Qui nisi desierit ꝛc. In hoc loco dicit ouidius ꝙ si aliquis est occupatus
amore pernicioso illum debet relinquere et sic non interficiet se nec erit ali
cui causa mortis et nisi desierit forte peribit amore. ¶ Construe. Ille ama-
tor qui est periturus amore suo misso id est pernicioso et nulli pro non et vlli
et ille amator nō erit actor funeris d est mortis vlli id est alicui et sic littera

A LIBRARY FAVORITE OF THE XV CENTURY

To the educated Italian of the xv century the classics were as familiar as Dickens and Thackeray are to our generation. If not Virgil or Plato, at least Ovid's *De Arte Amandi et de Remedio Amoris* was an integral part of every well-selected library.

(Printed by Baligault in Paris in 1493. *British Museum.)*

POLIPHILO QVIVI NARRA, CHE GLI PARVE ANCORA DI DORMIRE, ET ALTRONDE IN SOMNO RITROVARSE IN VNA CONVALLE, LAQVALE NEL FINE ERA SERATA DE VNA MIRABILE CLAVSVRA CVM VNA PORTENTOSA PYRAMIDE, DE ADMIRATIONE DIGNA, ET VNO EXCELSO OBELISCO DE SOPRA. LAQVALE CVM DILIGENTIA ET PIACERE SVBTILMENTE LA CONSIDEROE.

LA SPAVENTEVOLE SILVA, ET CONSTIpato Nemore euaſo, & gli primi altri lochi per el dolce ſomno che ſe hauea per le feſſe & proſternate mẽbre diffuſo relicti, me ritrouai di nouo in uno piu delectabile ſito aſſai piu che el præcedente. El quale non era de monti horridi, & crepidinoſe rupe intorniato, ne falcato di ſtrumoſi iugi. Ma compoſitamente de grate montagniole di non tropo altecia. Siluoſe di giouani quercioli, di roburi, fraxini & Carpini, & di frondoſi Eſculi, & Ilice, & di teneri Coryli, & di Alni, & di Tilie, & di Opio, & de infructuoſi Oleaſtri, diſpoſiti ſecondo laſpecto de gli arboriferi Colli. Et giu al piano erano grate ſiluule di altri ſiluatici

A POPULAR ROMANCE OF THE XV CENTURY

The most famous illustrated book of its period, containing woodcuts of great excellence, which are in perfect harmony with the typography. *(From Colonna:* Hypnerotomachia Poliphili. *Aldus. Venice*, 1499. *Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.* $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5$ *inches.)*

information, the heroine has been identified as Lucretia Lelio, daughter of a jurisconsult of Treviso, who entered a convent after having been attacked by the plague.

A brief outline of the plot shows what sort of story appealed to the readers of the fifteenth century: Poliphilo, the hero, imagines himself, in his dream, as passing through a dark wood until he reaches a small stream, by the side of which he rests. The valley through which the stream runs is filled with fragments of ancient architecture, which form the subjects of many of the illustrations. As he comes to a great gate he is threatened by a dragon. He escapes from this, and meets five nymphs, who take him to the court of their queen. The queen's palace is fully described, as are also four magnificent processions, the triumphs of Europa, Leda, and Danaë, and the festival of Bacchus. Then comes a triumph of Vertumnus and Pomona, and a splendid picture of nymphs and men sacrificing before a terminal figure of Priapus. In the meantime Poliphilo has met the fair Polia, and together they witness some of the ceremonies in the temple of Venus, viewing its ornaments and those in the gardens around it.

The second book tells how the beautiful Polia, after an attack of the plague, takes refuge in the temple of Diana. While there, she dreams a terrifying dream of the anger of Cupid, so that she is moved to allow her lover to embrace her, and because of this is driven from the temple of Diana with sticks; and, lastly, how Venus takes the lovers under her protection, and at the prayer

of Poliphilo causes Cupid to pierce an image of Polia with his dart, thereby fixing Polia's affections firmly upon her devoted admirer.

In Florence, Cennini issued his *Virgil* (1471) and Petri, a year afterward, the *Philocolo* of Boccaccio and the *Trionfi* of Petrarch. Later, the Florentine Presses showed marked interest and skill in producing illustrated volumes, and, during the last decade of the century, this city might have competed with Lyons in the publication of secular literature except for the influence of Savonarola. The personality of this great preacher carried the masses completely off their feet, and his sermons, in the form of printed and illustrated tracts,[1] were sold literally by the thousands. In their frenzy of enthusiasm, the people were moved to burn even the most precious of their secular volumes, and then — almost before the leaves of the profane books turned into ashes — these extraordinary Florentines, the product of the most inexplicable period in the world's history, completely reversed their attitude, and burned the preacher himself! Who would dare to say what sort of reading they really preferred!

The art of printing can scarcely be said to have been "in its infancy" in Italy after 1474, for, by that time, Italian printers — especially in Venice — were supplying all the world with books. This makes it a bit more difficult for our "cradle books" to tell their story; yet they have already given ample testimony that Italy must have been a far more interesting country in which to live than Germany!

[1] See Plate on p. 127.

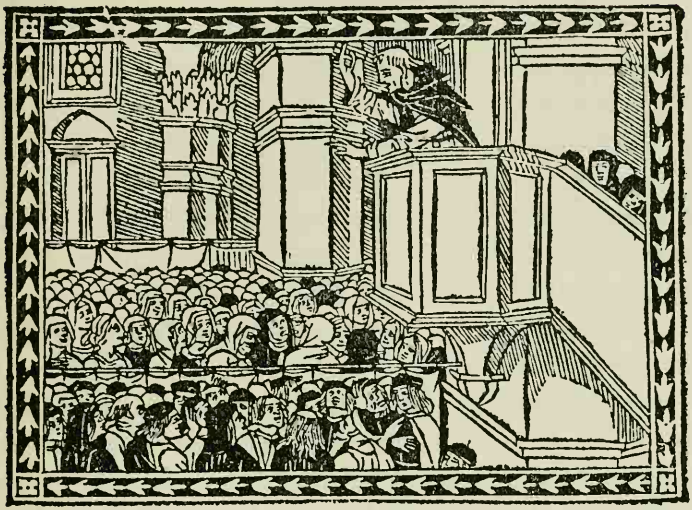
One of the most interesting communications passed on to me by the "fifteener" classics was the story of the bitter warfare waged between the purists, who sought to hold the Latin language true to the cold elegance of the Ciceronian style, and those, equally zealous and sincere, who strove to maintain it nearer to the vernacular, in which form it had proved a serviceable medium of conversation even between those who could not read. The Ciceronians won, as a result of which you and I were enabled to learn classical Latin, and — later, perhaps! — to appreciate its beauty; but the very perfection of the Ciceronian style limited its usefulness, and the outcome of the struggle put an end to the use of Latin as the common means of human communication. What a pity that zealous advocates of an international language have never hit upon the idea of restoring Latin instead of laboring to introduce the composite Esperanto!

The part played by the printing press in this momentous struggle was more vital than could have been supposed at the time. The printers of the fifteenth century tried to hold themselves neutral, but — perhaps unknowingly, and surely without intention — they actually fostered the vernacular languages, and by giving them permanence helped to deliver the death blow to Latin as a language of common understanding.

This new viewpoint suggested by the cradle books encouraged me to inquire more deeply into the influence of the printing press in forcing the national languages of Europe to become permanent. When the knowledge of a people becomes dependent upon reading rather

COMPENDIO DI REVELATIONE DELLO INVTILE SERVO DI IESV CHRISTO FRATE HIERONYMO DA FERRARA DELLORDINE DE FRATI PREDICATORI

IESVS MARIA



BENCHE Lungo tempo in molti modi per inſpiratione Diuina io habbia predecte molte choſe future: nientedimeno conſiderando laſententia del noſtro ſaluatore chriſto leſu/ che dice. Nolite ſanctum dare canibus: nec mittatis margaritas ueſtras ante porcos: ne forte conculcent eas pedibus: & cõuerſi dirumpant uos: Sono ſempre ſtato ſcarſo nel dire: & non miſono exteſo piu che miſia parſo eſſere neceſſario alla ſalute degli huomini | in modo che le conclusione noſtre ſono ſtate poche/aduengha che molte ſie

A SAVONAROLA TRACT

The people of Florence were so carried off their feet by the magnetism of Savonarola that they were moved to burn even the most precious of their secular volumes in bonfires in the public squares, buying thousands of the great preacher's tracts. Six months later they burned the preacher himself!

(From Savonarola: Compendio di revelatione. *Printed by Piero Pacini da Pescia. Florence,* 1496. *Biblioteca Nationale, Florence.* 7 × 5 *inches.)*

than upon oral discussion and a study of pictorial design, dialects become obstacles. When William Caxton, in 1476, moved his Press from Bruges to London, Edward IV was King of England. The battle cries of the Lancastrians and the House of York had scarcely died away, and Caxton found the English language broken up into numerous confusing variants. Blind Harry, the minstrel, might sing the deeds of William Wallace in whatever dialect he chose and he would still draw his little crowd about him, but to print books which should have a general appeal, some one of these variants — the one most generally in use — had to be adopted; and, by its adoption, this particular variant became nationalized.

When I come to France, my cradle books introduce me to a very different life from that disclosed by their German and Italian cousins; for "in everything French," as Bourdillon says — "their philosophies, their religions, their arts, their drudgeries — there is a certain breathlessness, as of things that have to keep up with the pace of an advancing universe, to ride always on the foam crest of the foremost wave." While the earliest books, printed at Paris in the Sorbonne, were classical, it is of Lyons that we think when French "fifteeners" are mentioned — Lyons, the headquarters for the light literature of the period. Here the printers produced their popular romances, folksongs, and legends printed in the vernacular, while the presses in other localities were turning out theology and the classics in Latin. There were almost as many printing offices in Lyons as there were in Paris, and the frequent

Lyonnese fairs attracted visitors from all over Europe. The printers of Lyons were not restricted by the theological censorship, which at this time was so active in Paris.

Of the secular publications of Lyons there is one title, the *Roman de la Rose*,[1] which has always appealed to me more than all the others. It is one of those volumes that has made cradle books for me something more than memorials of the early artist printers. For no less than three centuries, first in manuscript and later in printed form, this textbook of all lovers enjoyed a wonderful popularity, and it is a curious fact that the demand only began to wane when ambitious but misguided publishers, in the editions issued after 1500, sought to appeal to a less intelligent class by cheapening the physical appearance.

The copies of this famous book, printed in the fifteenth century, contain mute but eloquent evidence of its universal acceptance as the Lovers' Bible. In one copy I found certain lines underscored, in another a simple date written in the margin. It required but little imagination to turn back the centuries and form in my mind's eye a picture of those whose hands had previously held these very volumes. These books were no longer *incunabula*, but living records of human lives. Perhaps the lovers had held the book between them, startled to find recorded in the page those very emotions which until then they had supposed were sacred to themselves. And the date in the margin? Who shall say? It may be the symbol of a tryst kept or broken,

[1] See Plate on p. 131.

of a faith rewarded or abused. But there it stands. If a record of a guilty secret, it has at least its human appeal.

Guillaume de Lorris wrote the first portion of the poem, and in the story the author tells us that he was twenty-five years old. This youth, presumably about the year 1237, wrote a charming allegory which is an ancestor of *Pilgrim's Progress*. The pages are full of joy and happiness, and in them delightful young people of the thirteenth century are personified, surrounded by singing birds and blooming flowers, to all intents and purposes as twentieth-century characters might be portrayed today. The poem is full of the buoyancy and optimism of youth. When about half finished, the poet died, and the fragment lay unpublished for forty years — until another youth, Jean de Meun, discovered and completed it. The work of the two writers is easily distinguished by the abrupt disappearance of the light-hearted approach to life, for which is now substituted a cynical humor that changes romance into satire.

The first printed copy is credited to Ortuin and Schenck, of Lyons, and the date is put at about 1481; the second is attributed to Jean Syber of Lyons printed about 1485; the third is assigned to Guillaume Le Roy, of Lyons, about 1487. No one of these issues contains any directly distinguishing mark, and I was curious to know how the experts could so confidently classify each in its proper chronological place, and establish the approximate date. The type, the nature of the illustrations, and the watermarks in the paper all played their parts. The watermarks in Number I are Lyonnese, the woodcuts resemble in style those in other Lyons

Cy commẽce le romãt de la roſe
Ou tout lart damours eſt encloſe.

Maintes gens dient
que en ſonges
Ne ſont q̃ fables
et menſonges
Maiſ on peult telz
ſonges ſongier
Qui ne ſont mye
menſongier
Mais ſont apres bien apparant
Si en puis bien trouuer garant
Ung acteur denomme macrobes
Qui ne tint pas ſonges a lobes
Ainçois eſcript la viſion
Qui aduint au roy cypion
Quiconques cuide ne qui dye
Que ce ſoit vne muſardye
De croire que ſonge aduienne
Et qui vouldra pour fol men tienne
Car endroit moy ay ie fiance
Que ſonge ſoit ſignifiance
Des biẽs aux gens et des ennuys
Que les pluſieurs ſongent p nuyts
Moult de choſes couuertement
Que on voit puis appertement.

THE LOVERS' BIBLE

For more than three centuries, first in manuscript and then in printed form, this textbook of all lovers enjoyed a wonderful popularity. *(From* Roman de la Rose. *Ortuin and Schenck. Lyons,* 1481. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 5$ *inches.)*

books, and one of the copies of Number I, at the Bibliothèque Nationale, contains the name of a well-known Lyons lady as its first owner — so the place of origin is easily established. But equally convincing evidence shows that the two other folios were also printed in Lyons, so the order of precedence required further study.

The type in the copy now accepted as the earliest is unusual. In the Royal Library at Dresden there is a volume printed in the same type, which contains a rubricator's note dated 1481. The only printers known to have used this face are Ortuin and Schenck. The type in Number II is identical with the "Venetian" face used by Jean Syber in books printed in 1482 and 1483, and from its worn appearance, as compared with these volumes, the *Roman de la Rose* appears to have been printed later. In the copy assigned to Le Roy, the type is identical with that used by him in several volumes, one of which is dated 1486. Thus bibliographers establish the priority with absolute confidence.

To browse among the cradle books of the Netherlands is to find oneself at once involved in the old controversy of Laurens Coster against John Gutenberg as the "inventor" of the art of printing. I confess myself unusually cautious in approaching this topic, owing to an experience of years ago when my elder son was a small boy. One evening, at dinner, he asked me to tell him the story of the invention of printing. Being in a casual frame of mind, I related this atrocious yarn:

Once upon a time, years and years ago, there was a small boy who had a birthday. On this most important

occasion his parents presented him with a jackknife and a white linen suit. Proud of his new possessions, the small boy wandered forth in the fields in search of adventure. As he went, he picked red cranberries by the way, which he placed in a pocket of his new white suit. At length the small boy found himself near a monastery, in front of which were standing several chairs, newly made of soft wood, placed in the sun for the glue to dry. In the small boy's mind there seemed to be some association between those soft-wood chairs and the new knife, and before the story could be told, the new knife had carved out an initial in the seat of one of the new chairs. Responding to the inborn love of color, the small boy crushed his red cranberries in the carved initial, and then drew back to regard the results of his handiwork.

Just at that moment one of the monks came out from the monastery to look at the chairs. The small boy was alarmed. In order to conceal his mischief, he quickly seated himself in the chair he had just decorated, and greeted the monk with an expression on his face such as the cat wears after eating the canary. The monk at once saw what had happened, and he took the small boy across his knees to spank him for his naughty behavior. There, upon the seat of the new white trousers, was an impression of the first rubricated initial!

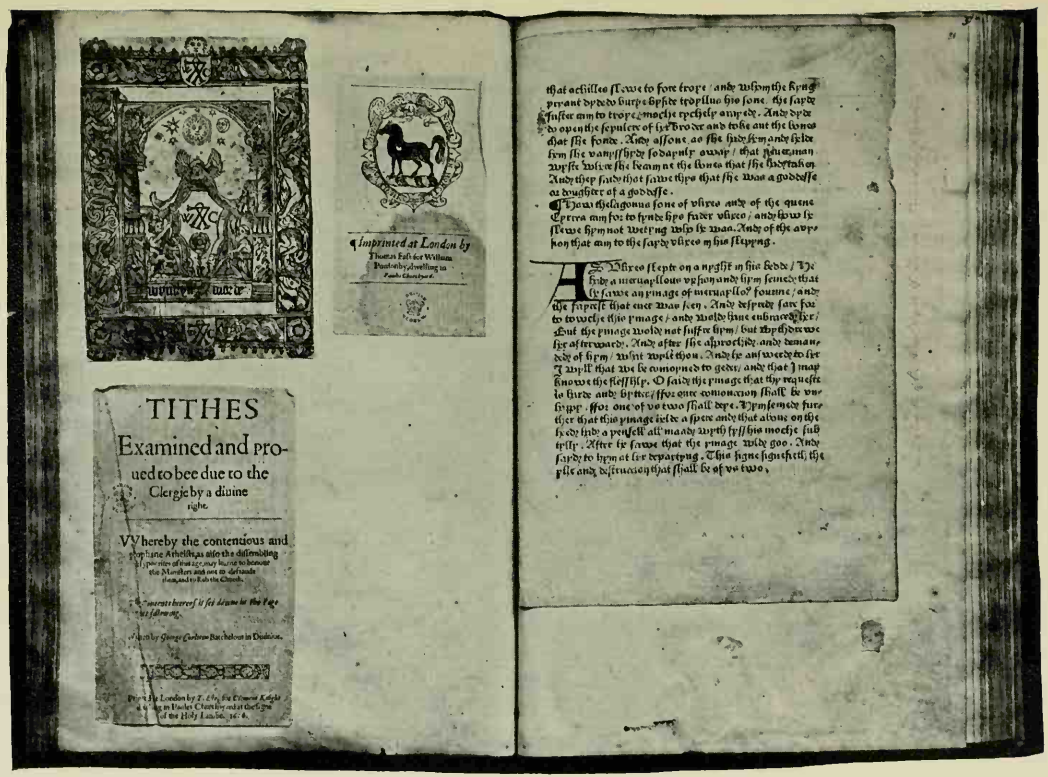
The monk, being a learned man, was seized with an inspiration. On the promise of escape from punishment, the small boy gladly agreed not to disclose what had happened, and they went inside the monastery together. Here the monk and the small boy set up

the earliest printing establishment. The monk carved out on the seat of a soft-wood chair the letters he wished to print. Then he bruised some cranberries in the letters, and, seizing the small boy by the neck, he pressed him first upon the seat of the chair and then upon a sheet of white paper. And this method of printing was followed until the small boy wore out.

It seemed to me that this made a perfectly good story, but when I met my son the following afternoon I found myself most unpopular. It appeared that he had been given this subject as a school exercise, and when he had repeated the absurd story I had told him, he was taken seriously to task. I succeeded in assuming the responsibility, but since then I have declined to be drawn into any discussion regarding the invention of printing.

What has become of the hundreds of thousands of cradle books which were printed during those last fifty years of the fifteenth century? Thousands of them are in private libraries, many really worthless in spite of their early date, because they are not included among the volumes which represent the work of the best printers, or because they have no story to tell. Some of them were mutilated by later would-be historians of the art of printing in gathering their material. In the British Museum are nearly a hundred scrapbooks which represent one of these exploits. These were made in the seventeenth century by an Englishman named John Bagford,[1] who aspired to write a history of printing.

[1] See Plate on opp. page.



THE SCRAPBOOKS OF JOHN BAGFORD

In the XVII century John Bagford aspired to write a history of printing, and he collected material by ruthlessly tearing whatever pages interested him from any volumes that came into his hands. There are a hundred scrapbooks like these in the British Museum. On the upper left is a page from Wynken de Worde, on the right hand a leaf torn from Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*.

His notion of collecting material was to tear ruthlessly whatever pages interested him from volumes which came into his hands, and these scrapbooks contain relics of not less than 25,000 early printed volumes. Some authorities, like Thomas Hearne and W. Y. Fletcher, eulogize Bagford for having preserved for posterity even fragments of publications some of which would otherwise have disappeared; others, like William Blades and Dibdin, do not hesitate to dub him "a wicked old biblioclast" and "a literary monster."

At all events, an examination of this material clearly shows why such a large percentage disappeared through natural causes (and to that extent we may forgive Bagford), for the scrapbooks include leaves from pamphlets and volumes obviously of but transitory interest or value, printed to satisfy a passing popular demand. This might be some phase of a religious subject, some inexpensive edition of a popular classical author, the ballads of the day, or some other unimportant publications of secular nature, hawked about by an itinerant pedler of the fifteenth century, or later. It requires more than an early date upon a volume, even of this important period, to give it value! Think of the millions of pamphlets and books printed today which are not prized enough even to be placed on a library shelf after being read! But we must raise our eyebrows at Bagford when we find in his scrapbooks leaves filched from volumes printed by William Caxton, by Pynson, and by Wynkyn de Worde; from the 1602 edition of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, of which only a single

copy is now known to exist; and even an illuminated leaf from the *Gutenberg Bible* itself!

In my adventuring I have merely scratched the surface of the subject opened up by the cradle books. One might spend his life wandering along this single by-path, and then regret that the span of years was all too short. But, even browsing about as I have done, I have picked up much that has added to my understanding and appreciation of the Book. The more I study, the more solicitous I become of the estimate that future generations will make of our own times, by applying the same analytical tests and arriving at equally definite conclusions. Are we content to be judged by the volumes we are producing today? It is certain that we shall be so judged. The standard of our workmanship, the demands of our intelligence, the spiritual and material expressions of our personalities — all will be put in the scales, on one side or the other, in estimating the place we of the twentieth century shall occupy in the history of civilization; for books are witnesses that cannot be coerced or discredited. They stand for what they are — today as they did four and a half centuries ago, and will be accepted as reflections of an era in some ways as extraordinary and perplexing as that which gave birth to the cradle books of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER V

The Book in Full Dress

V

THE BOOK IN FULL DRESS

"THE effort of William Morris to procure harmony between the illustration and the printed page," remarked my old friend, Marion H. Spielmann, one day thirty years ago, "has resulted merely in the production of beautiful books on a line notoriously inadequate for the needs of the present day."

This flat statement from so eminent an authority as the editor of the English "Magazine of Art" came to me in the nature of a shock. When, five years earlier, I had been trying to grasp the basic principles of bookmaking, no one had even suggested to me that a knowledge of the inter-relationship between decoration and types was essential. This did not enter into the old-line conception of the printer's province — yet what could be more obvious? At the various Presses of that time might be found motley collections of woodcuts and line plates. There were initial letters; headpieces and tailpieces; Maltese, Latin, or Greek crosses; wreaths and festoons; floating angels and the like — all left over from volumes that had been printed in the dim and distant past.[1] Occasionally a more modern border or ornament was selected and ordered from the stock designs of the typefounders' specimen book. On the slightest provocation, and with apparently no consid-

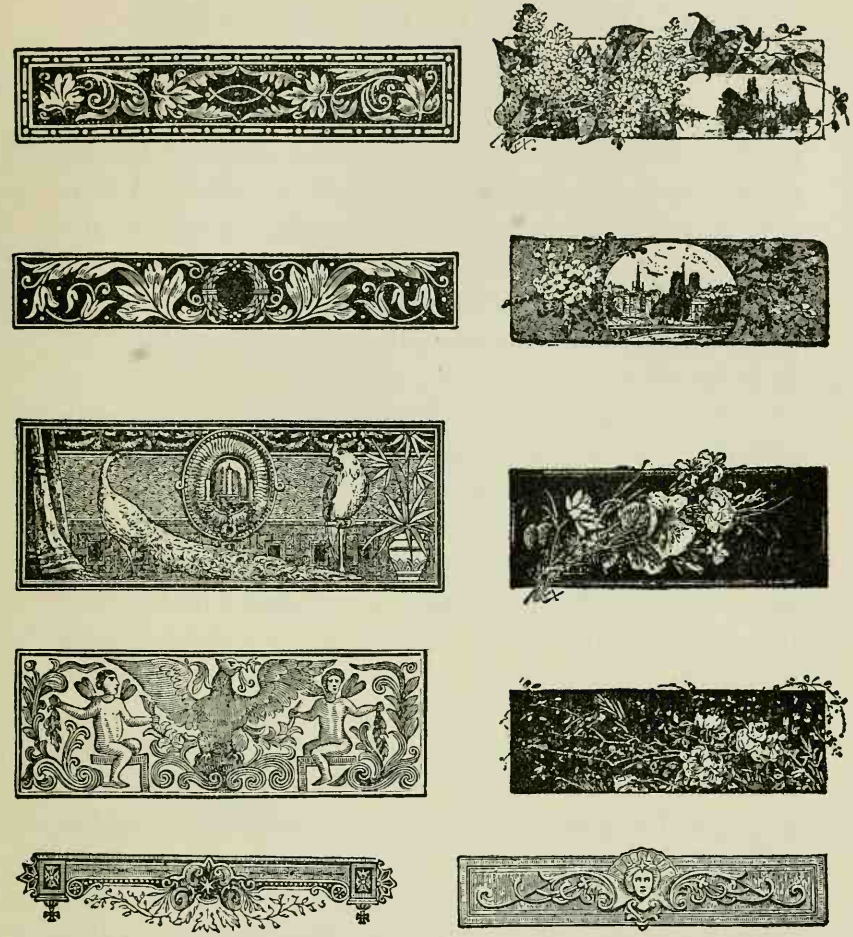
[1] See Plate on p. 141.

eration of its relation to the type, some one of these awful symbols of barbarism was slipped in on a title page, or to "fill in" the blank space at the beginning and end of chapters, which, it seemed to me, the God of the Book surely intended for higher purposes.

What those higher purposes were I did not then know. I was simply aware that I sensed a definite lack of *something* in most of the examples where illustration and decoration were combined with type pages issuing at that time from even the best-known bookmaking establishments. Then the glory of the Kelmscott volumes burst upon the world, and, in a goodly company of other booklovers, I reveled in this manifestation of what modern decoration could be made to mean. A suggestion that these masterpieces were "inadequate" from one in whose judgment I felt such supreme confidence as I did in Marion Spielmann's, seemed almost sacrilegious!

My friend must have seen the effect upon me, for he was quick to add to what he had already said:

"Don't misunderstand me. Of course, I admire the Morris volumes — but, according to my definition, they are really not books at all. A book is primarily intended to be read, and any features in illustration or decoration, in ornament, page, or page arrangement, that obviously conspire against the reading of the book, or the concentration of the reader, are wrong in art and indefensible in practice. Revivalism is all very well; but to be living, an art must be the outcome of present-day needs, not of past-day limitations. It does not follow that we may not base our work upon the work of the



STOCK DECORATIONS OF THE 1890's

A Page from the Specimen Book of a Famous American Press of the Period.

past; but it must be a modern rendering, not an imitation or a mere adaptation of what, after all, was modern enough in the fifteenth century. Special books, no doubt, and special purposes justify exceptional revivals; but the habitual printing of modern books by the great Presses in a medieval fashion, in order to satisfy a love of the antique, would be as reasonable as to print *Pickwick* in Chaucerian language and spelling, in order to please modern lovers of *cinquecento* art."

This experience was what first beguiled me into my adventure among illustrations and decorations. I was determined to place myself in a position where I might know why I liked or disliked, and thus gain the added pleasure that comes with even limited apperception. I soon discovered how close the relationship between the art of the illustrator and the art of printing really is. Gradually the scope of the co-relation expanded, and increased knowledge concerning the one gave me a better understanding of the other. In coming into full accord with Spielmann's estimate of the Kelmscott volumes, I lost none of my pleasure in their beauty because of a different classification of their *genus*. Had any doubt as to the keenness of Spielmann's constructive criticism remained, the flood of sham Kelmscotts that resulted from the Morris revival would have proved a justification; for in copying a wonderfully fine thing of its kind the imitators seized upon the inconsistencies of the style, and in their lack of understanding emphasized them.

The importance to me of this chance conversation with Spielmann was the revelation it gave that if a

CAFÉ DES EXILÉS

THAT which in 1835 — I think he said thirty-five — was a reality in the Rue Burgundy — I think he said Burgundy — is now but a reminiscence. Yet so vividly was its story told me, that at this moment the old Café des Exilés appears before my eye, floating in the clouds of revery, and I doubt not I see it just as it was in the old times.

An antiquated story-and-a-half Creole cottage sitting right down on the banquette, as do the Choctaw squaws who sell bay and sassafras and life-everlasting, with a high, close board-fence shutting out of view the diminutive garden on the southern side.

PHOTOGRAVURE COMBINED WITH TYPE

An interesting example of an artist's scheme of combining his own decorations with type by means of photogravure reproduction. Note the lack of harmony between the hand-drawn title line and the text type. *(From Cable:* Old Creole Days. *Designed and Decorated by Albert Herter. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons,* 1897. *Exact size.)*

printer was to produce well-made illustrated volumes it was as essential for him to become conversant with the history and precedent of decoration as to know his types. The fact that this was not generally recognized at that time explained the lack of appeal in most books of this nature. I do not mean by this that there were no handsomely decorated or illustrated books issued during this period, but I observed that such volumes were the result of the artist's coöperation with the printer rather than the reverse. I remember a charming edition of Drake's *Culprit Fay*[1] where type and decoration are splendidly combined; but the credit for this belongs to Edmund H. Garrett, the artist, who drew his illustrations after the type page had been determined. Another excellent example is Cable's *Old Creole Days*,[2] in which Albert Herter's beautiful illustrative decorations, reproduced by the more exacting process of photogravure, are effectively combined with type; and here again the artist planned the page and laid out the scheme.

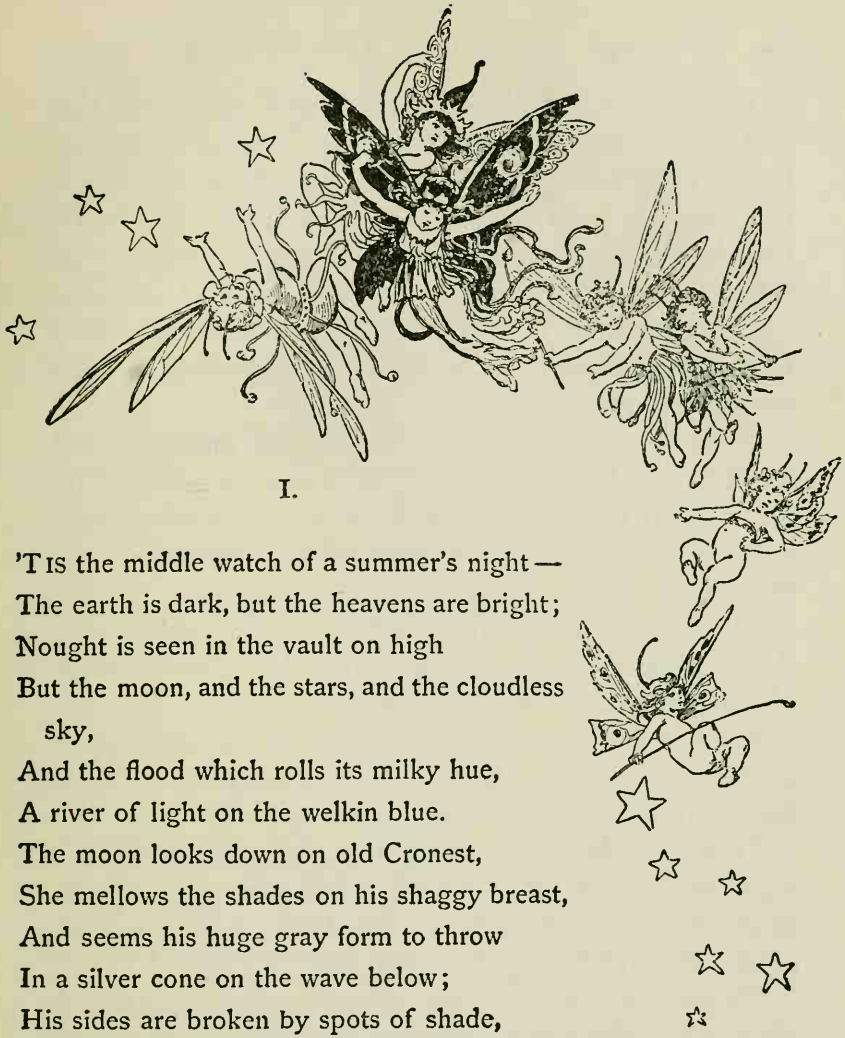
Herter went back to the old volumes where the decorative artists combined illustration with ornamentation. While many of the early designs might seem to be illustrations, their use for the purpose of giving information was a later but a natural development. The first initial letters, the headpieces and tailpieces, the borders, conveyed no suggestion to the reader of the nature of the subject matter; but in some of the illuminated manuscript volumes, such as *Queen Mary's Psalter* of

[1] Rowfant Club, Cleveland, Ohio, 1899. See Plate on p. 145.
[2] See Plate at p. 142.

the fourteenth century, the decorations began to take on illustrative form, and the early printed volumes soon followed suit. The descriptive text of books on scientific subjects was supplemented by crude explanatory drawings; title pages began to combine illustration with decoration.

Out of all this came the modern practice of using decoration and illustration primarily for information, as seen in many of the advertising brochures produced today. Just as the Salvation Army uses the brass band to attract its audience, so is supremely beautiful ornamentation employed to attract the eye, hoping to hold it long enough to get the commercial message across. Modern printing expresses itself as an art far more consistently in the advertising brochure than in the book. A corporation does not figure the cost of the artist or the engraver when it sets out to produce an effect, whereas a publisher must. While Will Bradley was in my University Press studio at Cambridge, Massachusetts, the "Century Magazine" gave him a commission to design the cover for their Christmas issue. A tobacco company, whose advertisement was to appear on the back cover, also gave him the order to design their page, that the cover might be kept harmonious as a whole. Bradley received an "honorarium" of $250 for the front design, and rendered a "bill" for $1250 for the back— this representing the difference between Art and Commerce!

The Bradley "vogue" in America about 1905 resulted in a mortifying experience for me. A well-known firm of New York clothiers gave Bradley a free hand



I.

'T IS the middle watch of a summer's night—
The earth is dark, but the heavens are bright;
Nought is seen in the vault on high
But the moon, and the stars, and the cloudless
sky,
And the flood which rolls its milky hue,
A river of light on the welkin blue.
The moon looks down on old Cronest,
She mellows the shades on his shaggy breast,
And seems his huge gray form to throw
In a silver cone on the wave below;
His sides are broken by spots of shade,
By the walnut bough and the cedar made,

LINE ENGRAVING COMBINED WITH TYPE

Showing a page from a volume planned and decorated by an artist who combined his designs with the type instead of by a printer who combined the type with the design.

(From Drake: The Culprit Fay. *Designed and Decorated by Edmund H. Garrett. Printed in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in* 1893, *by the University Press for the Rowfant Club, Cleveland, Ohio. Exact size.)*

in designing their advertising material. A part of this was a brochure entitled "Things Clerical," exploiting, as its title suggests, wearing apparel for the clergy. On the first page the title line was designed in beautiful letters, the rest of the page being covered by an elaborate decorative design. The first sheet off the press was sent to New York, on receipt of which the clients telegraphed to stop the work until their publicity man could arrive in Boston.

I met him at the station early the next morning, and we took our breakfast together. At last we came to the occasion of the conference. Drawing the folded sheet from his bag, he held it before me, and pointed to the first page.

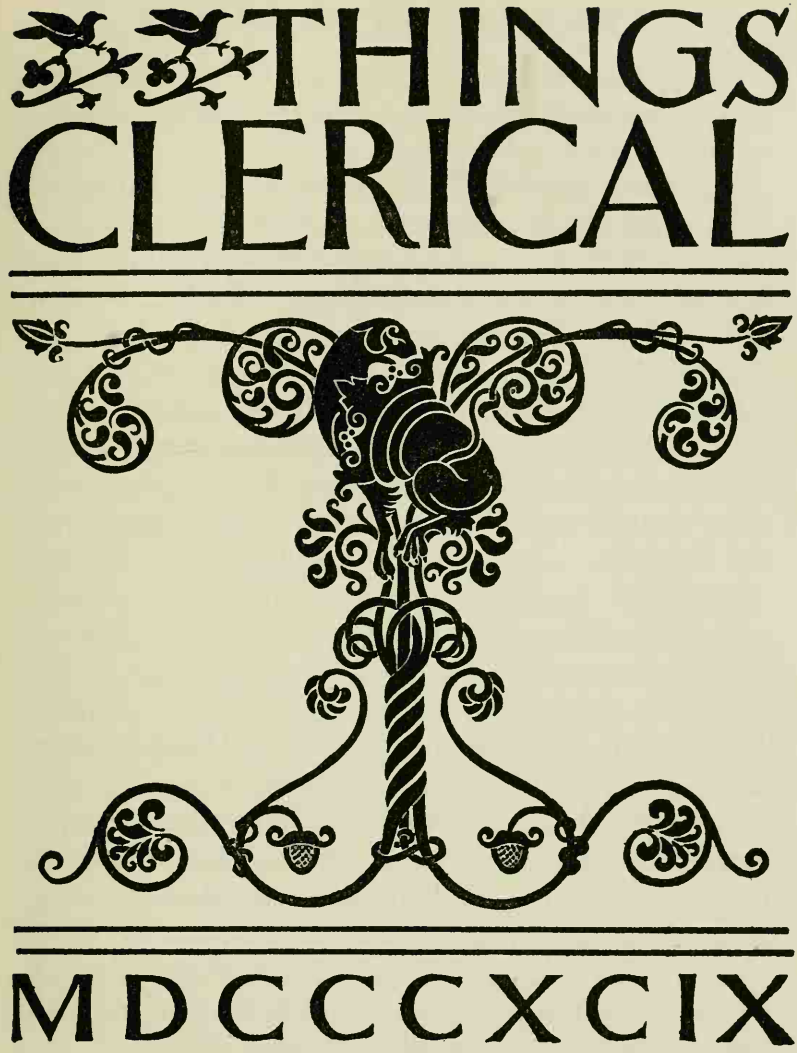
"Will you kindly tell me what possible significance that design has in connection with the subject matter of this pamphlet?" he demanded.

Frankly, I had given the matter no previous thought, as the artistic lay-out had been left wholly in Bradley's hands; but some reply had to be made.

"I haven't heard Bradley say what he had in mind," I admitted rather lamely; "but I suppose the design is meant to suggest the chancel rail always found in front of the altar in Episcopalian churches."

"Why, of course!" my friendly critic exclaimed after a moment's consideration. "How stupid of me! I see it clearly now. I'll go right back to New York, and you go ahead with the printing."

When I returned to my office I sent for Bradley, and asked him the same question that had been put to me.



COVER FOR AN ADVERTISING BROCHURE

An effective combination of beautiful lettering with a decorative design harmonious in scheme and weight of line. The decoration is the artist's conception of the *motif* of the Holy Grail.

(Designed by Will Bradley. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ *inches.)*

"Why — don't you recognize it?" he exclaimed, obviously hurt. "It is the *motif* of the Holy Grail!"

There are two volumes I keep in my library because they seem to be successful echoes of the Morris books, and the reason they were successful is that their designers made original applications of the Morris principles instead of merely copying them. One of these is *Fringilla*[1] (which also shows the influence of Aubrey Beardsley), designed by Will Bradley, and the other is *Esther*,[2] with decorative borders and initial letters by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. Both these books were planned by the artists, but the latter also shows the discriminating taste of the late Frederick H. Day, who, during his brief career as a book designer as well as publisher, demonstrated his artistic sense in several other volumes which must always rank high in the history of American bookmaking. I like to compare *Esther* with the *Wood Beyond the World*[3] of William Morris. The latter has the advantage of the specially designed Chaucer type, while the former is composed in the standard Old Style Antique. I like this book the best of Morris' lesser publications, because, being himself the author, he rewrote the text to fit the type, and was thus relieved of the necessity of using the leaf florets he frequently employed to space out his lines without breaking the word.

I had already seen the printer coming into his own

[1] Burrows Brothers Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1895. See Plates on pp. 150, 151.

[2] Copeland and Day, Boston, 1895. See Plate on p. 155.

[3] See Plate on p. 154.

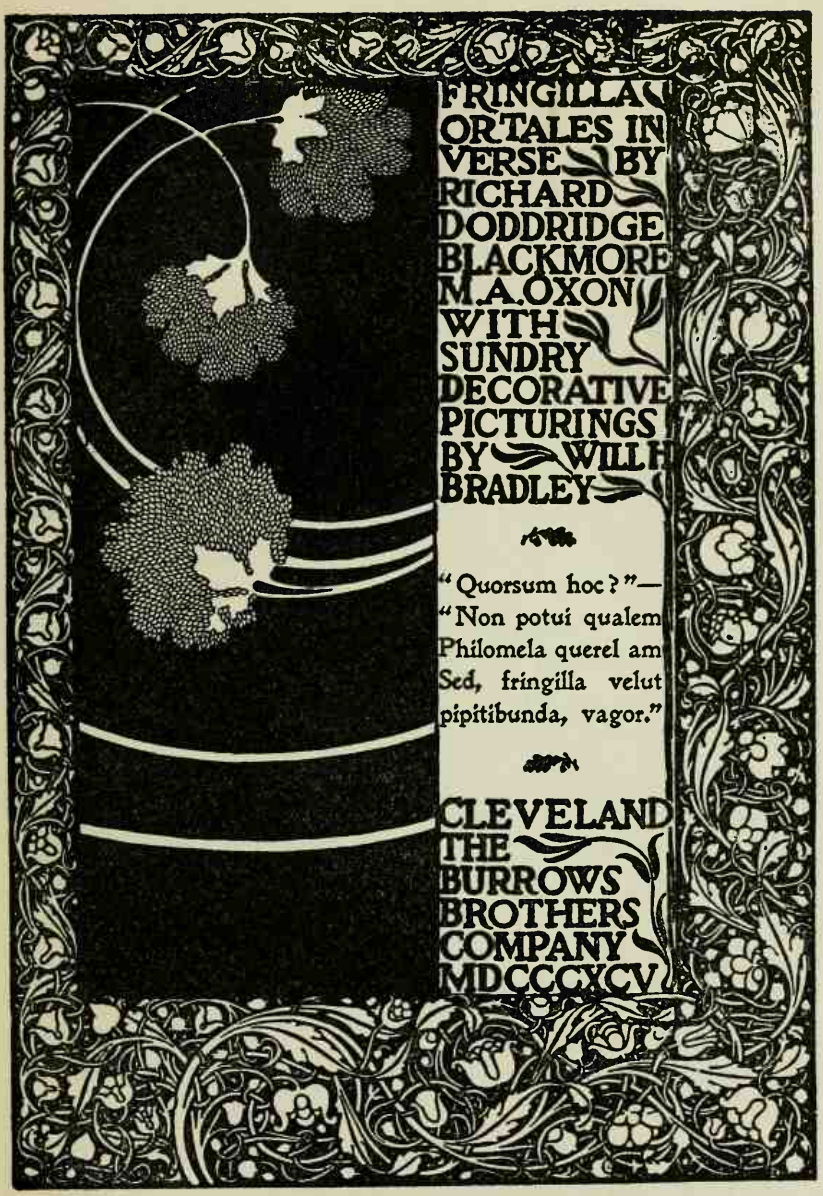
in forcing recognition of himself as the proper expert to determine the correct use and combination of his types. Now I found him face to face with the same situation in the matter of the decorated book. Few of even the best artists possess more than a superficial knowledge of types, and most are notoriously poor letterers. In the example already mentioned of *Old Creole Days*,[1] Albert Herter's letters are neither in keeping with the type nor with the decorations themselves. The printer in those days would have considered it an impertinence on his part to criticize them, yet he should have done so.

Of those artists who have contributed to books Joseph Pennell seems to me to have mastered most successfully the co-relation between type and decoration; yet his pet aversion to a fractional line at the end of a paragraph, as carried to the extreme in his own *Adventures of an Illustrator*,[2] results in a type page too solid to be agreeable to the reader who finds relief in the natural breaks in the type mass. Other artists have produced work that corresponds in line and is in perfect harmony with the type, others have made drawings which successfully conveyed their messages; but when a Pennell design is combined with a carefully thought out type page I always feel that the decoration has not only gained added expression from the correctness of its surrounding letters, but that it has also given additional significance to the feeling of the type itself. Joseph Pennell would have made a wonderful typographer had he turned his art in that direction.

[1] See Plate at p. 142. [2] Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1926.

AN AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF AUBREY BEARDSLEY

(Designed by Will Bradley. Printed at the University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1895.)



The Morris style of having the decoration dominate the type resulted in many volumes which lacked originality and thus defeated their own end, but Will Bradley conceived a combination of the Morris decoration with the Beardsley decorative-illustrative style in a strikingly original way. He repeated a fault of Morris' by having the letters too near the decoration.

As I thought the matter over, I became convinced that the ideal result could only be secured by having an illustrated book dominated either by an artist who also possessed a real knowledge of type, or by a printer who also possessed a real knowledge of decoration. With this in mind, I studied the principles employed by the early makers of books, in which the arts of decoration and printing were so successfully combined. From the very beginning the pitfalls were only too apparent! In fields of art other than that of printing the imagination of the artist is stimulated by the subject itself, and in some branches he is distinctly aided by color or form; but when it comes to the art of the Book the refinement and beauty of the printed page, in its subtle shadings, has to depend wholly upon the abstract feeling of the artist printer. When decoration is combined with type the test of the printer's artistic sense is that much the more exacting.

I was delighted to find that the adventure took me back into familiar fields. Again I found myself mingling with the worthies of the Book of the fifteenth century who sought to preserve art and extend learning at the same time. The desire for decoration, of course, goes back at least as far as the cave dwellers, where it may have found expression in a wild flower fastened in the woman's hair, or in a few extra scratches made upon the stone that formed the medium of communication. At all events, the desire has always been a natural one, its genesis being the innate human craving for adornment. When manuscripts began to be transcribed, the beauty of the thought was supple-

AN UNFINISHED PAGE OF ILLUMINATION

In this volume, printed by Schoeffer in 1471, the artist has sketched in his decoration in pencil, intended to be elaborated in color, with backgrounds in a cream tint, over which the gold leaf was to be laid. The design of the type is so close to the hand letter, and the presswork so excellent, that it is difficult to distinguish the printing from the actual work of the scribe.

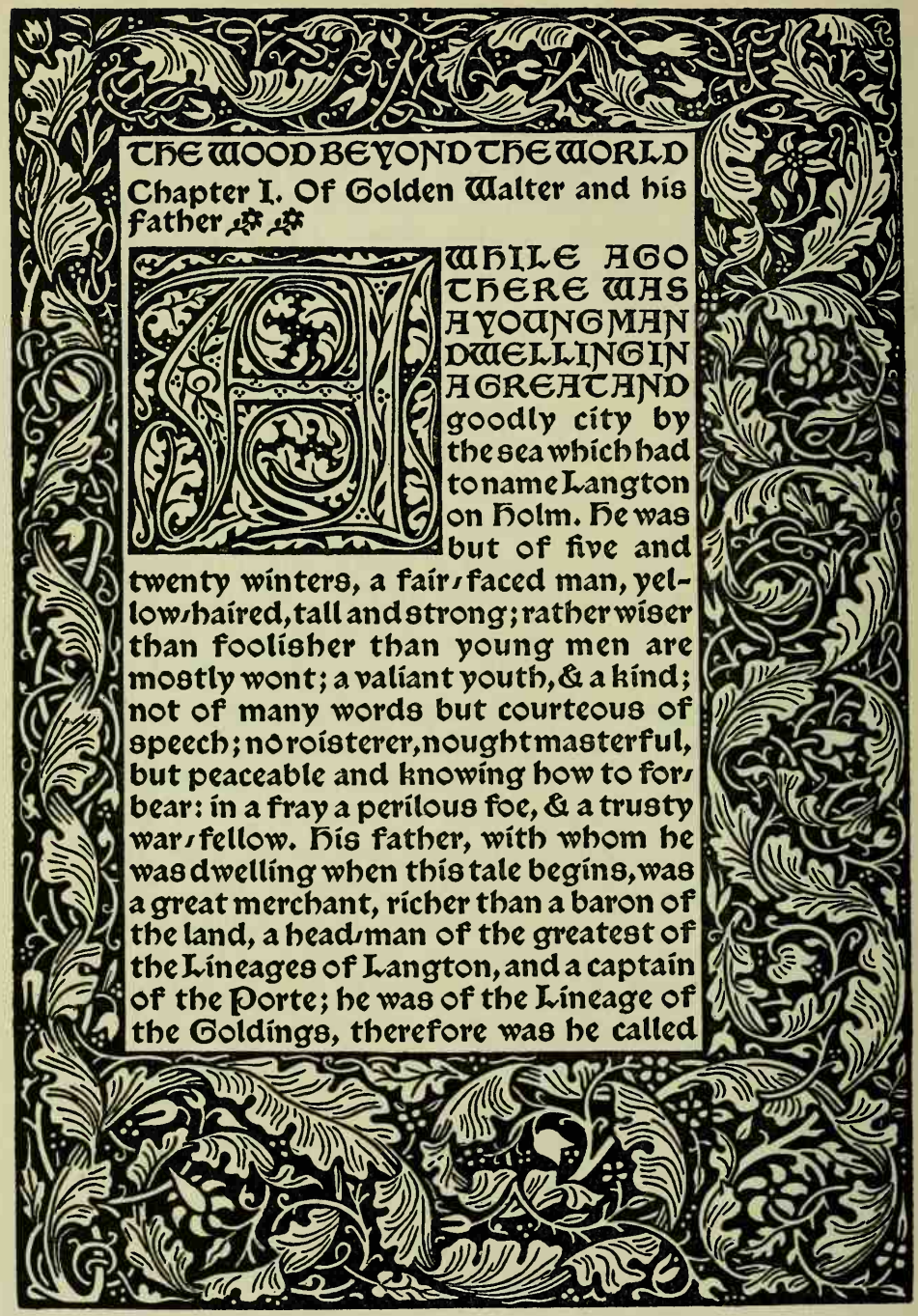
(From Clemens V: Constitutiones cum apparatu Joannis Andreae. *Mainz. British Museum.* $15\frac{3}{4} \times 11$ *inches.)*

mented by the beauty of the hand letter and the accompanying illumination; in the printed book the same effort was made, through the design of type or decoration, to hold the vehicle of thought in keeping with the thought itself.

The whole idea of decorating a printed book was an echo from the handwritten volume, and just as the early scribe coöperated with the illuminator by leaving blank spaces for the initial letters and ample margins for the major illuminations, so did the early printer seek to enhance the beauty of his own printing by offering the decorative artist an opportunity to display his skill. At the British Museum I found a most interesting relic.[1] In a volume printed by Peter Schoeffer in 1471 the artist was well on his way to give the first page a sumptuous treatment when, for some reason, he stopped. The borders and the illustrative headpiece are sketched in with pencil, the heavy rules and backgrounds being overlaid with a creamy pigment on which the gold leaf was to have been added. Even in its unfinished state it gives evidence that the artist possessed uncommon skill. In many of the illuminated printed volumes I have studied, the design of the type is so close to the hand letter, and the presswork is so excellent, that it requires the most careful scrutiny to distinguish them from embellished manuscripts.

Against these and the partially completed copy just mentioned, there are other examples which tell a different story. It was, of course, optional with fifteenth-century bookbuyers as to just what form this

[1] See Plate at p. 152.

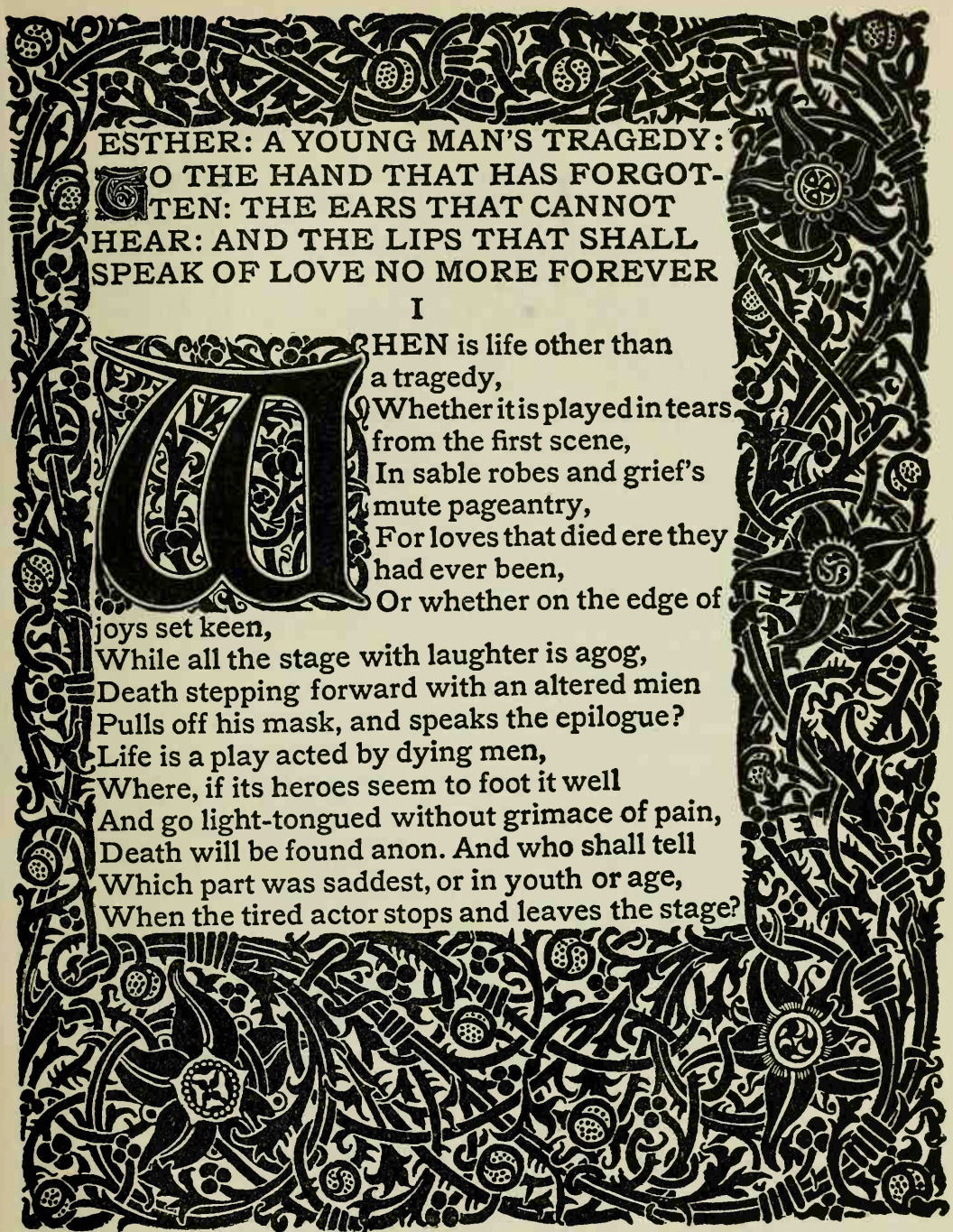

THE WOOD BEYOND THE WORLD

Chapter I. Of Golden Walter and his father

A WHILE AGO THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN DWELLING IN A GREAT AND goodly city by the sea which had to name Langton on Holm. He was but of five and twenty winters, a fair-faced man, yellow-haired, tall and strong; rather wiser than foolisher than young men are mostly wont; a valiant youth, & a kind; not of many words but courteous of speech; no roisterer, nought masterful, but peaceable and knowing how to forbear: in a fray a perilous foe, & a trusty war-fellow. His father, with whom he was dwelling when this tale begins, was a great merchant, richer than a baron of the land, a head-man of the greatest of the Lineages of Langton, and a captain of the Porte; he was of the Lineage of the Goldings, therefore was he called

A WILLIAM MORRIS PAGE

Composed in the famous Chaucer type, with decorations in complete harmony with the design and weight of the letter. Morris, being the author, rewrote his text to avoid breaking words at the end of lines. This page is much more legible than are most of his books. *(From Morris:* Wood Beyond the World. *Printed at the Kelmscott Press, London, in* 1894. *Exact Size.)*


ESTHER: A YOUNG MAN'S TRAGEDY: TO THE HAND THAT HAS FORGOTTEN: THE EARS THAT CANNOT HEAR: AND THE LIPS THAT SHALL SPEAK OF LOVE NO MORE FOREVER

I

WHEN is life other than a tragedy,
Whether it is played in tears from the first scene,
In sable robes and grief's mute pageantry,
For loves that died ere they had ever been,
Or whether on the edge of joys set keen,
While all the stage with laughter is agog,
Death stepping forward with an altered mien
Pulls off his mask, and speaks the epilogue?
Life is a play acted by dying men,
Where, if its heroes seem to foot it well
And go light-tongued without grimace of pain,
Death will be found anon. And who shall tell
Which part was saddest, or in youth or age,
When the tired actor stops and leaves the stage?

AN AMERICAN KELMSCOTT

The result of the Morris craze in the 1890's was a flood of imitation Kelmscotts. Most were unsuccessful because they were copies instead of original expressions. In *Esther*, F. H. Day, the publisher, and B. G. Goodhue, the artist, successfully worked out their own idea of the Kelmscott model.

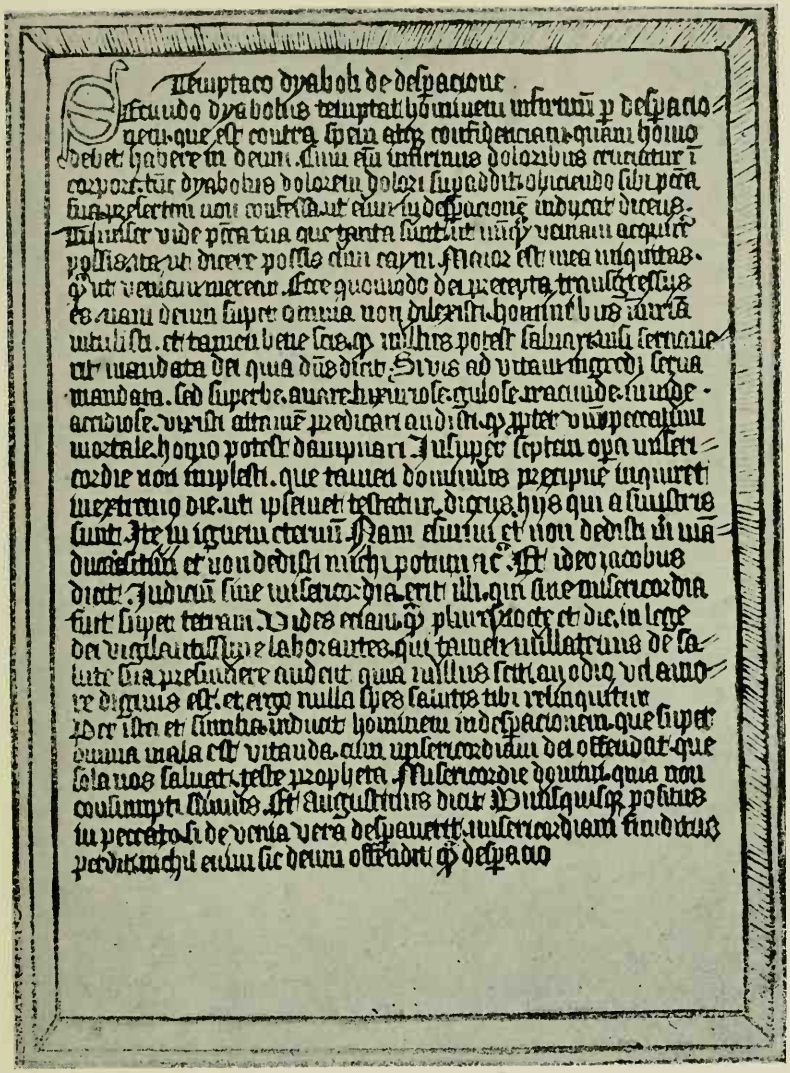
(From Esther. *Printed at the University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, for Copeland and Day. Boston,* 1895. *Exact size.)*

decoration should take, and the very large number of cradle books which have come down to us with the blank spaces still unfilled[1] stand as mute evidence of a splendid idea that went wrong.

It was at this point that the advancement of the new invention of printing seemed doomed to interruption. The decoration of books was absolutely demanded by those who bought them. The theory of the early printers that embellishment could be added to the printed page by hand was sound enough, but when it came to practice the cost was too great for most of those who wished to secure the gem of thought in its new and less expensive form; while for those who could afford the luxury of the hand illumination the printed book was not thought to compare in any way with the glory of the handwritten volume.

Just at this crisis the art of woodcutting came to its assistance. The close relationship of this art to the art of printing is so apparent that it is a thousand pities the two ever had to be divorced. In typography, the impression is taken from a raised surface of metal; in the woodcut, from a raised surface of wood — and the similarity of method makes them natural kinsmen. The art of woodcutting, like the art of printing, was an art of the people. It was practiced in Germany and the Netherlands a quarter of a century before books came to be printed from movable types. Sometimes it expressed itself in woodcuts without letterpress, as in the *Saint Christopher* of 1423, now in the John Rylands Library; sometimes in woodcut pictures and woodcut

[1] See Plate at p. 16.



A BLOCK BOOK

Instead of being set from movable types, the woodcutter laboriously cut the entire page on a single block of wood. An error was fatal. Block books preceded the art of printing by twenty-five years, but they also overlapped.

(From Ars Moriendi, 1467. *British Museum.* 7 × 5 *inches.)*

text, as in the *Ars Moriendi*[1] and other block books. In these volumes the letters were laboriously cut by hand on a single piece of wood, and if a single error was made it was necessary to discard the entire page block. The leaves were printed on one side of the sheet only, the paper being pressed into the face of the block by rubbing it on the back with a burnisher. These curious examples, more interesting than beautiful, used to be given dates earlier than 1460, and were considered as forerunners of the invention of printing; but Alfred W. Pollard[2] has pointed out the utter lack of evidence to confirm these dates, and advances the still more interesting theory that the early printers employed woodcutting for short, popular publications, requiring frequent reprinting, as a forerunner of stereotyping or electrotyping.

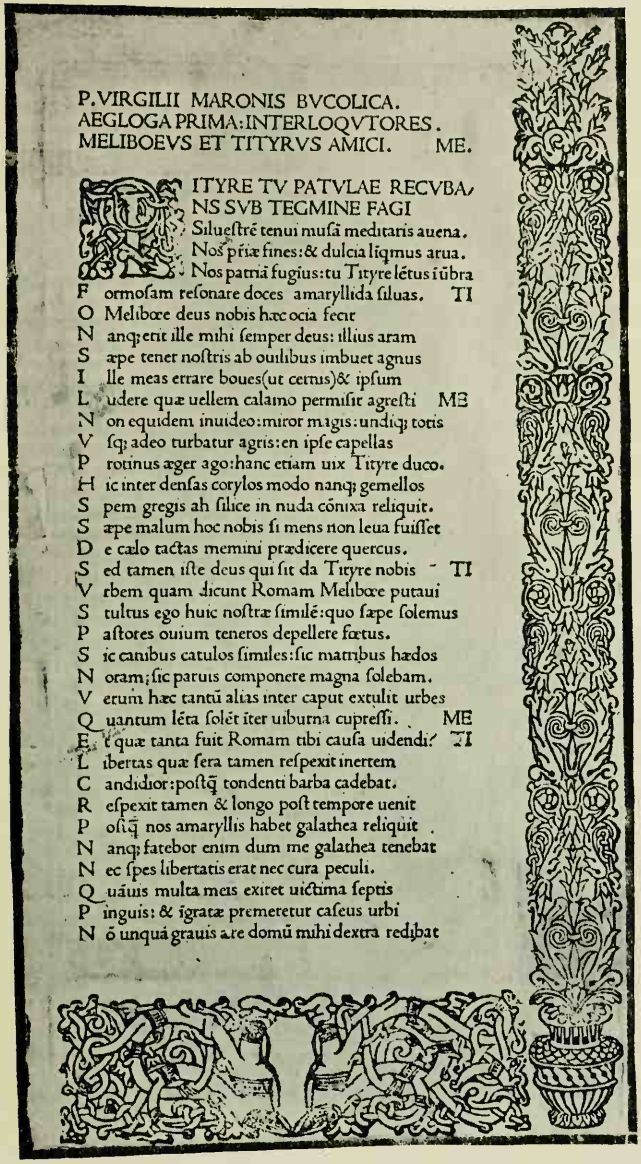
The next step in the evolution was to combine woodcut decorations and illustrations with text printed from movable types. The early artists who drew and then cut their designs on wooden blocks were forerunners of the early printers, at least so far as their effort consisted in conveying a message to the masses through the reproduction of old Bible legends and pictorial representation of popular questions, which later was expressed in printed words. These publications exerted tremendous influence, at first in serving religious purposes, and later being used to attack the Church through satirical presentation of the clergy. Beyond this, they preserve valuable records of the customs, the costumes, and the manners of their period.

[1] See Plate at p. 156. [2] See *Fine Books:* Alfred W. Pollard, 1912.

The limitations of this method are obvious. It soon became apparent that if confined to block books and block printing, the art of woodcutting could never find scope enough to achieve permanence; so the two arts, each gasping for breath, joined forces. The wood blocks replaced the work of the engrosser and illuminator in the initial letters and in the ornamentation which combined with the type in producing beautiful pages; and by their union established the printed book in so impregnable a position that further opposition by the patrons of the handwritten volume was hopeless.

At first, the blank space left by the printer for the initial, and the expanse of white margin,were decorated by means of woodcut blocks, which were stamped on by hand and then colored by the illuminator. The very rare Grenville copy of *Virgil* at the British Museum is as excellent an example of this phase as I know. The impression of the woodcut blocks used for the initial letter and the marginal decoration look as if put on with rubber stamps, but had the artist completed his work in colors and gold the imperfections would have been concealed. I have seen many finished examples where it is difficult to discover the underlying design. In some cases the initials do not fit the spaces left for them, which must have been the origin of the present sloppy practice of using initial letters that are too short for the space they occupy. Half a line too much blank below an initial ruins the appearance of many an otherwise well-conceived page.

This matter of stamping and coloring, while less expensive than the fully illuminated printed volumes,


P.VIRGILII MARONIS BVCOLICA.
AEGLOGA PRIMA: INTERLOQVTORES.
MELIBOEVS ET TITYRVS AMICI. ME.

TITYRE TV PATVLAE RECVBANS SVB TEGMINE FAGI
Siluestré tenui musã meditaris auena.
Nos pñæ fines: & dulcia liqmus arua.
Nos patriã fugius: tu Tityre lẽtus ĩ ũbra
Formosam resonare doces amaryllida siluas. TI
O Melibœe deus nobis hæc ocia fecit
Nanq; erit ille mihi semper deus: illius aram
Sæpe tener nostris ab ouilibus imbuet agnus
Ille meas errare boues (ut cernis) & ipsum
Ludere quæ uellem calamo permisit agresti ME
Non equidem inuideo: miror magis: undiq; totis
Usq; adeo turbatur agris: en ipse capellas
Protinus æger ago: hanc etiam uix Tityre duco.
Hic inter densas corylos modo nanq; gemellos
Spem gregis ah silice in nuda cõnixa reliquit.
Sæpe malum hoc nobis si mens non leua fuisset
De cælo tactas memini prædicere quercus.
Sed tamen iste deus qui sit da Tityre nobis TI
Vrbem quam dicunt Romam Melibœe putaui
Stultus ego huic nostræ similẽ: quo sæpe solemus
Pastores ouium teneros depellere fœtus.
Sic canibus catulos similes: sic matribus hædos
Noram; sic paruis componere magna solebam.
Verum hæc tantũ alias inter caput extulit urbes
Quantum lẽta solẽt inter uiburna cupressi. ME
Et quæ tanta fuit Romam tibi causa uidendi? TI
Libertas quæ sera tamen respexit inertem
Candidior: postq̃ tondenti barba cadebat.
Respexit tamen & longo post tempore uenit
Postq̃ nos amaryllis habet galathea reliquit
Nanq; fatebor enim dum me galathea tenebat
Nec spes libertatis erat nec cura peculi.
Quãuis multa meis exiret uictima septis
Pinguis: & ingratæ premeretur caseus urbi
Non ũquã grauis ære domũ mihi dextra redibat

WOODCUTTING CONTRIBUTES TO THE PRINTED PAGE

Purchasers of the early printed books could not afford to have the initial letters and the border decorations put in by hand. The art of woodcutting came to the rescue of the art of printing by supplying wooden stamps to be put on by hand and then colored, thus somewhat reducing the expense. *(From a* Virgil, *printed by Bartholomæus Cremonensis in Venice in* 1472. *British Museum.* 9 × 5 *inches.)*

was still too costly to be practical, so the next step was the natural one of combining the woodcut decorations and the type, and printing them together upon the press. Even now the love of color and gold held for a time. There are examples where the owners of volumes thus printed turned them over to the illuminator to embellish; but as the decorations came to be well printed, and booklovers realized that the two arts were at last successfully combined, the artist decorator began gradually to retire from the making of the Book.

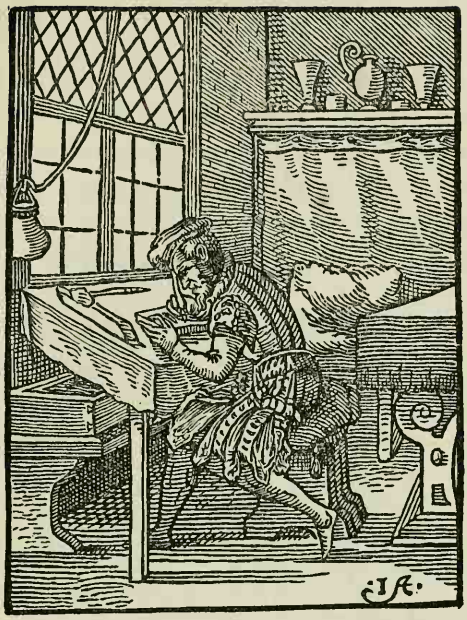
Thus this art of woodcutting, the new ally, liberated the art of printing from its dependence upon miniature painters and illuminators. The initial letters, of richly decorative design, were now cut on blocks of wood and then combined with the type with no attempt to cover them with color, but depending upon their own beauty to enhance the attractiveness of the printed pages. Frontispieces were added, and even the margins were decorated with ornamentation fashioned along the line of the more elaborate and more costly hand illumination.

What appealed to me particularly was that the early artists recognized the early printers as men of learning, and in subordinating themselves paid a tribute to the printer's superior knowledge. So long as printing remained an art — well into the sixteenth century — there was a definite respect for the relation of the decoration to the type. Fifteenth-century printers used Gothic fonts more frequently than Roman, and the artist who designed the decoration kept in mind the heavy black of the type face. The volumes of Erhard Ratdolt, printed in Venice around 1470, offer most

admirable examples of borders and initial letters which combine perfectly with the type and with each other.[1] The artist, supposed to be Giovanni Bellini, who designed the initial letters and the illustrations for the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*,[2] printed by Aldus in Venice in 1499, kept his line light to correspond with the type, with the result that the decorations are as much an integral part of the printed page as the type itself. A recent edition of the *Rubáiyát*[3] printed by Johnck, Kibbe, and Company, in San Francisco, shows admirable consideration of this co-relation. Modern printers have not always been so scrupulous in preserving the harmony of the page. They have taken these heavy-faced blocks out of their proper environment, and have combined them with the lighter Roman faces so that the decoration absolutely overwhelms the type.

During the sixteenth century such supreme artists as Dürer and Holbein used the woodcut as the medium for expressing their genius, and carried it to its highest point. The latter's *Dance of Death*[4] has long been a classic, and the editions containing these reminders, even to the mightiest, that Death is no respecter of persons, are literally without number. By the middle of the sixteenth century copper-plate engraving appeared, and proved so popular that for approximately two centuries the woodcut was relegated to use in chapbooks and other "popular" publications. Some of the copper-plate titles are so beautiful in themselves

[1] See Plate on p. 163
[2] See Plate on p. 123
[3] See Plates on pp. 166, 167.
[4] See Plate on p. 162.



A WOOD ENGRAVER OF THE XVI CENTURY

(Cut on Wood by Jost Amman, 1564.)

I am a wood engraver good,
And all designs on blocks of wood
I with my graver cut so neat,
That when they're printed on a sheet
Of paper white you plainly view
The very forms the artist drew:
His drawing, whether coarse or fine,
Is truly copied line for line.

—Translated from Hans Sachs.

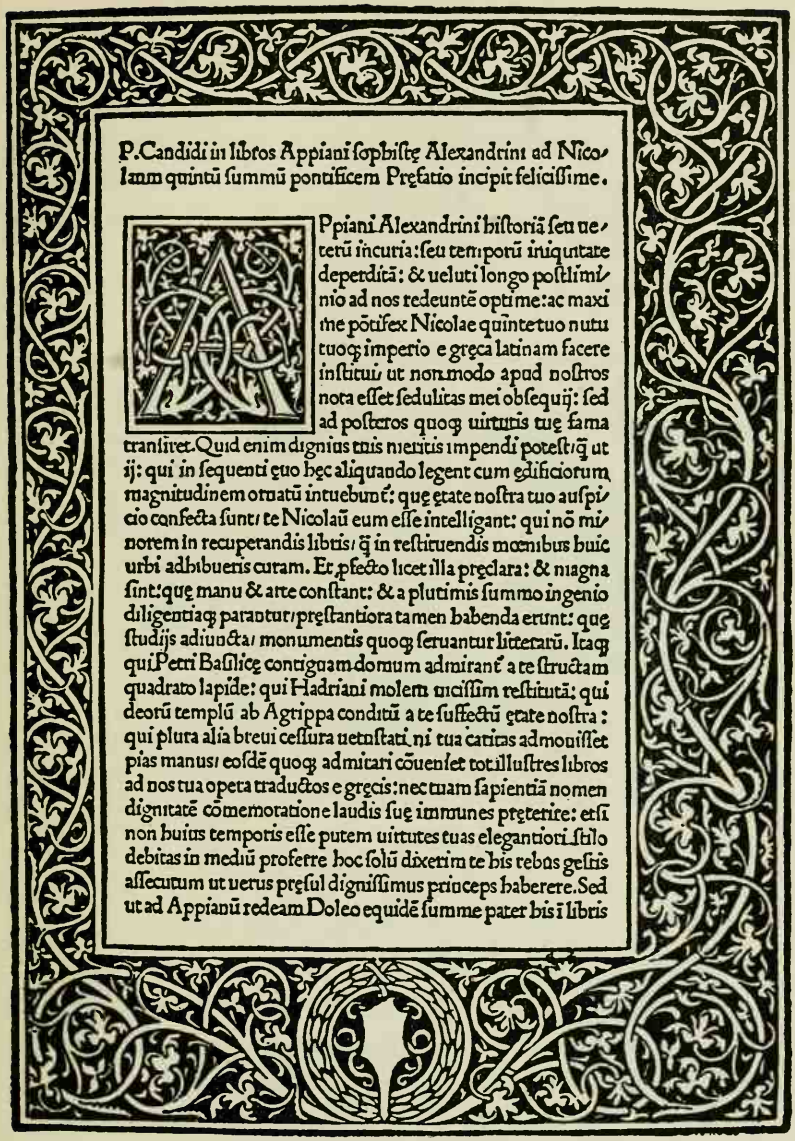
that at first the booklover does not realize their incongruity. The Plantin Press maintained the quality of its typography and presswork enough to prevent the handiwork of Rubens[1] from appearing too much out of place, but could anything call attention more loudly to the inferiority of the manufacture of many of the

The Dance of Death. Designed on Wood by Hans Holbein

Elzevir volumes than the carefully designed copperplate titles!

Toward the end of the eighteenth century woodcutting returned to the Book under the guidance of Thomas Bewick, in England, in the form of wood *engraving*. The woodcutter of the Middle Ages cut his designs with knives on the wood of the pear or the apple tree; Bewick supplied the modern woodcutter with

[1] See Plate on p. 107.



P. Candidi in libros Appiani sophistę Alexandrini ad Nicolaum quintū summū pontificem Prętatio incipit felicissime.

APpiani Alexandrini historiā seu ueterū incuria: seu temporū iniquitate deperditā: & ueluti longo postliminio ad nos redeuntē optime: ac maxime pōtifex Nicolae quinte tuo nutu tuoq; imperio e gręca latinam facere institui, ut non modo apud nostros nota esset sedulitas mei obsequij: sed ad posteros quoq; uirtutis tuę fama transiret. Quid enim dignius tuis meritis impendi potest, q̄ ut ij: qui in sequenti ęuo hęc aliquando legent cum ędificiorum magnitudinem ornatū intuebunt: quę ętate nostra tuo auspicio confecta sunt, te Nicolaū eum esse intelligant: qui nō minorem in recuperandis libris, q̄ in restituendis mœnibus huic urbi adhibueris curam. Et ꝓfecto licet illa pręclara: & magna sint: quę manu & arte constant: & a plurimis summo ingenio diligentiaq; parantur, pręstantiora tamen habenda erunt: quę studijs adiuncta, monumentis quoq; seruantur litterarū. Itaq; qui Petri Basilicę contiguam domum admirant a te structam quadrato lapide: qui Hadriani molem uicissim restitutā: qui deorū templū ab Agrippa conditū a te suffectū ętate nostra: qui plura alia breui cessura uetustati, ni tua caritas admouisset pias manus, eosdē quoq; admirari cōueniet tot illustres libros ad nos tua opera traductos e gręcis: nec tuam sapientiā nomen dignitatē cōmemoratione laudis suę immunes pręterire: etsi non huius temporis esse putem uirtutes tuas elegantiori stilo debitas in mediū proferre hoc solū dixerim te his rebus gestis assecutum ut uerus pręsul dignissimus princeps haberere. Sed ut ad Appianū redeam Doleo equidē summe pater his ī libris

THE ARTS OF WOODCUTTING AND PRINTING FINALLY COMBINED

The volumes of Erhard Ratdolt, printed in Venice about 1470, offer admirable examples of borders and initial letters which combine perfectly with the type and with each other.

(From the Appian. *Printed by Erhard Ratdolt, in Venice, in* 1477.*)*

engraver's tools, made an engraver out of him, and secured superb effects through contrasts in light and shade. It proved to be more than a mere revival, for the transformation from woodcutting to wood engraving introduced new methods which proved exceedingly popular. The introduction of illustrations

Woodcutting becomes Wood Engraving
A Bewick Plate.
(From Fables, 1818.*)*

in periodicals, about 1830, added a further impetus. I turn to my Cruikshank and my "Phiz" illustrations, of more recent date, and sincerely regret that this form of book decoration has passed away.

In 1860, zinc etchings had been produced simultaneously in Vienna and Paris, demonstrating that pen-and-ink drawings could be transferred to zinc and etched with acids much less laboriously than they could be

engraved on wood. During the 1870's, photography lent its aid to reproduction, and the photo-mechanical process, called Photo-Engraving, came into existence. Long after pen-and-ink illustration asserted itself as a distinct art, mechanical design still held close to the old woodcut model. The next step on the part of the photo-engraver was naturally in the direction of the photograph itself, and this led to the evolution of the "halftone" process.

The word "halftone," through familiar use, has come to be simply the name of a certain method of pictorial reproduction without conveying any specific indication of what it really is. Without going too deeply into the technical details, I have found it useful to know that a halftone reproduction is made by photography through a screen of opaque, evenly spaced lines, either parallel or crossing, forming transparent apertures, through which the image is re-formed. In the photographic operation of making a halftone negative, the screen is placed slightly in front of the sensitive plate. This space, known as screen distance, permits dispersion and diffraction of the light rays, so as to create lines or dots which vary in size, according to the intensity of the light reflected from the original, even though photographed through a screen having apertures uniform in size.

The halftone plate itself was the successful result of a natural desire to translate a photograph into some medium that could be printed upon a press. My first introduction to it was in 1891, when I began my service to the Book at the old University Press, in Cambridge,

6

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine
High-piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
"Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of her's to incarnadine.

7

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

8

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

HARMONIOUS COMBINATION OF TYPE AND DECORATION

Two pages which show careful consideration of relation of design and weight of line between type and illustration.

Quatrain 7

The text is set in Humanistic type, designed by William Dana Orcutt. The decorations are by Lawrence A. Patterson.
(From Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. *Johnck, Kibbe, and Company. San Francisco,* 1926. *Type exact size, illustration* 8 × 6 *inches.)*

Massachusetts. I well remember the pride that famous institution took in the fact that the first cylinder press in America was set up within its walls, which gave the establishment its early prestige in producing the finest results in printing illustrative plates. In 1868, A. K. P. Welch, of the firm of Welch, Bigelow and Company, John Wilson's predcessors as proprietors of the University Press, went to France for the purpose of inspecting a "new" press which French ingenuity had produced. Up to that time such volumes as Whittier's *Snowbound* (1865), containing beautiful woodcuts, had been printed on hand presses. The cylinder press differs from the old Adams or flatbed press in that the paper is fed to the type from a cylinder with only one point of contact from the type to the paper at the moment the two touch each other; while the action of the flatbed press forces the entire form of type into the paper at the same impression. Rumors of what this cylinder press would do made Mr. Welch eager to secure the new invention to use particularly in printing the magazine "Every Saturday" for J. R. Osgood and Company, of Boston, and he brought this model back with him. The original press was later sold to a Boston printer, and was destroyed in the Boston fire of 1872.

By the time I entered the University Press the revolution in printing machinery caused by this exploit had been accomplished. Cylinder presses, of American manufacture, were in all the leading pressrooms, and the hand presses had been relegated to oblivion. The new art of photo-engraving had replaced the art of

wood engraving, the first experiment at the University Press having been successfully made in an issue of the "Harvard Lampoon" in 1873.

A. W. Drake, of the Century Company, about 1881, in coöperation with Theodore L. De Vinne, took another dramatic step when he persuaded S. D. Warren and Company, of Boston, to produce a sheet with an artificial chalk surface, at first called "fine cut" paper. The Warren Company have a copy of the "Century Magazine" of December, 1887, which contains one 4-page and three 16-page inserts of woodcuts printed on what today we would call "coated" paper, and the appearance of these illustrations is striking when compared with the woodcuts and the two halftones that are printed in the advertising section upon uncoated stock. The importance of the medium upon which to print was again forcefully emphasized.

I have tried in vain to satisfy myself as to who really invented the halftone. The claimants to that honor are many, and each produces at least plausible evidence. As a matter of fact, the invention is undoubtedly a composite achievement to which several have contributed. However this may be, I found the story told me by the veteran, Stephen H. Horgan, of New York, of his participation in the early experiments, of intense interest. It seems that fugitive attempts to translate a photograph into a printing plate had been made as early as 1852, but it was not until 1880 that a halftone was actually made which could be printed upon a press. One evening, after dinner together at a club nearby, Mr. Horgan took me to the New York Public

THE FIRST HALFTONE

This is the first actual reproduction direct from nature ever printed on a press. Compare this with the halftone plates in this volume, and note the tremendous improvement in the results obtained.

(From "New York Daily Graphic," March 4, 1880.*)*

Library, and together we turned the leaves of an old file of the "New York Daily Graphic." When we came to the "birthday" issue of March 4, 1880, a double-page spread was shown, combining fourteen different methods of pictorial reproduction of the day, one of which includes the now famous print entitled "Shantytown."[1] It was with no little pride that Mr. Horgan pointed to this, and said,

"This is the first actual reproduction direct from nature ever printed on a press, and I made it."

In the editorial columns of this same issue I found the following interesting note:

"We have dealt heretofore with pictures made with drawings or engravings. Here we have one direct from nature. Our photographers made the plate from which this picture has been obtained in the immediate presence of the shanties which are shown in it. There has been no re-drawing of the picture. The transfer print has been obtained direct from the original negative. As will be seen, certain of the effects are obtained by the use of vertical lines. This process has not yet been fully developed. We are still experimenting with it, and feel confident that our experiments will in the long run result in success, and that pictures will eventually be regularly printed in our pages direct from photographs without the intervention of drawing."

How modest this prediction now seems in view of the domination the halftone has assumed in all branches of the graphic arts! It has revolutionized methods of paper making and ink making; it has entirely altered

[1] See Plate at p. 170.

the construction of presses; it is responsible for the incredible circulation of newspapers and magazines.

The halftone was just coming into general use in book-printing offices in 1891, and I well remember the hostility shown by the pressmen to the "crazy" innovation. Mr. Horgan was at that time art director of the "New York Herald," and in 1893 he wrote James Gordon Bennett that he could make a halftone plate which could be printed in the paper. Mr. Bennett sent this letter to the superintendent of his pressroom for an opinion, and received a reply which suggested that any man who believed that a halftone could be printed on a fast-running daily newspaper press was absolutely out of his mind. As a result of this Mr. Horgan lost his position on the "Herald," but later he took his idea to Whitelaw Reid on the "New York Tribune," and there accomplished what had been declared to be an impossibility. Royal Cortissoz, at that time art critic and literary editor of the "Tribune," describes the event: "I was helpless in the matter of showing what an artist's picture was like unless I could first persuade him to make a pen drawing of it. Photographs were used only as a basis for pen drawing. Pure black and white was our only illustrative ware; but at this time Stephen H. Horgan was interesting himself in the question of handling the halftone in such wise that it could be printed from the curved, stereotype plate of a newspaper. . . . They began with a photograph of the late Thomas C. Platt, just then elected to the United States Senate. It was successfully reproduced in halftone in the 'Tribune' of January 21, 1897, and during the

following years in which Mr. Horgan was art director of the paper he carried the process farther and farther, making a substantial contribution toward the universal adoption of the halftone as a means of newspaper illustration."[1]

Mr. Horgan told me an amusing story of an experience he had with Sir Hubert Herkomer in 1891, at which time he was completing his invention of intaglio engraving from line drawings. Herkomer had come to America to paint portraits of American celebrities, and he had learned from various artists that Horgan had a method of photographing a drawing on metal in wax so that an artist could etch it. Herkomer's inquiring and receptive mind demanded proof of the seemingly incredible feat.

"If I made a drawing of you now," asked Herkomer, "could you photograph it on metal?"

Receiving an affirmative reply, Herkomer made a drawing of Horgan in his working apron on ordinary writing paper. This was photographed on zinc and brought to the master artist.

"How much would I have to pay to see how you do it?" he demanded.

Horgan smiled, and named what he thought would be a prohibitive sum, but the artist drew from his pocket a small checkbook and immediately wrote a check for the amount mentioned. Sworn to secrecy, he watched Horgan carry through his process, and significantly remarked, "I never spent five hundred dollars that was of so much benefit to me!"

[1] *The New York Tribune. Incidents and Personalities in its History.*

Since then the art of photo-engraving has developed by leaps and bounds, and the Genius that has conducted it, now mechanically reproduces the copy set before the camera with a fidelity that is extraordinary. From its very nature, the present halftone plate, although effective in full-page inserts, was never suitable to be combined directly with type. With other methods of reproduction, the illustrations have been made to harmonize with the type; with the halftone, the type has to be harmonized with the illustration, and to do this, the ever-present handicap of the highly surfaced paper must be overcome. The halftone is not what its name implies, but is an aggregation of many tones. Type, on the other hand, being printed in but one tone, must be so arranged as to call upon the white spaces of the page, in shape and distribution, to harmonize with the intermediate greys of the halftone plate. No simple undertaking, this!

The halftone plate has won for itself a triumph unequaled by any of the preceding processes, yet I venture to predict that within another decade its use will be confined almost entirely to newspapers. I firmly believe that for books, for the highest grade of advertising brochures, and even for magazines, the halftone, with its screen over even the lightest tones, will be replaced by the *highlight* halftone, from which the screen is eliminated where tones occur which are as light as the paper on which it is printed. Difficulties in presswork are largely simplified by the elimination of this seemingly useless screen area, and a highlight halftone plate can be printed on paper freed from the

THE HALFTONE OF THE FUTURE

A highlight plate, in which the halftone screen is eliminated where tones occur which are as light as the paper on which it is printed.
(By Courtesy of "Pencil Points")

artificial chalk surface, and thus come closer to coordinating with the type. The highlight plate has, I believe, opened up a new era by preserving the value of the ingenious invention of the halftone while eliminating the inartistic elements of translating photographic reproduction into a medium to be multiplied upon the printing press.

I have no doubt laid myself open to the charge of being "mid-Victorian" in standing as a champion of woodcuts, which have become a lost art of expression, but I insist that my appreciation of the value and importance of the halftone is by no means lessened by my feeling that the newer invention has been misused sadly. That it has its place in the graphic arts is indisputable; that it has contributed vastly to the advance of the graphic arts is beyond question. Perhaps my old-fashioned fondness for the woodcut is a bit intensified by my admiration for the superb examples of the art preserved in the work of Timothy Cole.[1] Only recently I put one of Timothy Cole's reproductions of a masterpiece against a halftone plate I had previously admired of the same subject, and I became promptly aware that I had permitted myself to be content with something which, in spite of the ingenuity of its maker, absolutely lacked the vitality and individuality of the art which it has supplanted. How could it be otherwise? No photograph can translate the value of a picture with absolute precision, nor can it convey to him who looks the true message of the artist. When I study a wood engraving by such a master as Timothy Cole,

[1] See Plate on p. 179.

I feel that I am in actual touch with the artist himself. It is one artist being interpreted by another. A camera cannot interpret, for it possesses no understanding.

I wonder if we should attach any significance to the fact that during the last decade illustrations have practically disappeared from novels, while newspapers have come into existence with phenomenal circulations which convey the news to their clientele almost entirely through the medium of halftone pictures. Of course the cinema has taught people to absorb stories through their eyes instead of through their minds, and perhaps to assimilate the daily news in like manner is a natural sequence; but the whole movement would seem to be retrogressive — back to the time when people had to gain information from pictorial design because they could not read, or because books were too rare or too expensive to be commonly possessed.

The disappearance of illustrations from novels has been a boon from the standpoint of the author. He draws the picture of his characters not by description, but bit by bit as the story progresses, intending that his reader shall visualize them as if in life rather than as photographic studies. Rarely does the artist absorb this characterization even as well as the average reader. He seizes upon some incident in the story, and develops an excellent sketch of the characters as they rest in his own mind instead of interpreting to the reader real portraits of personalities such as the author has carefully endeavored to create. Most authors feel that it is far better to leave the fate of the re-creation to the limitation of the casual reader than to the mercy of

A MODERN WOODCUT

The close relationship of the art of woodcutting to the art of printing is so apparent that it is a thousand pities the two ever had to be divorced. *(Engraved on Wood by Timothy Cole from Painting by Franz Hals. Courtesy The Century Company, New York.)*

the illustrator! And even with a sympathetic artist, the reproduction of the design has to be the photo-mechanical halftone, instead of the more living art of the wood engraver.

Since the elimination of illustrations in works of fiction, the desire on the part of the public for decoration has been gratified by the universal custom of using a highly decorative jacket. This also has a practical appeal. Each volume on the bookseller's counter is in competition with dozens of others lying beside it. If the prospective buyer can be attracted to pick up a particular volume and glance it over, the chances of its sale are that much enhanced.

During the run of one of my novels, some years ago and before the era of decorated jackets, I chanced to go to the news-stand in a New York hotel to purchase some theater tickets. Placed conspicuously on the counter I noticed copies of my story. The clerk with whom I chatted about the tickets was affable and confidential.

"You're the feller who wrote that book, aren't you?" he demanded, associating the name I gave him for the tickets with that on the cover of the volume.

Acknowledging the accusation, I asked the bromidic question, "How is it going?"

"Oh, it's selling all right," he replied; "but you fellers don't know how to make books that will sell. You ought to put a picture of a pretty girl on the jacket. That's what'll do it. It don't make a bit of difference what's on the *inside* of a book!"

Since then the trend of the decorative jacket has

proved the clerk to have possessed the full power of prophecy and divination!

My adventures among the decorated books of all ages, covering so many years, have increased my respect for artist or printer who realizes the intrinsic value of restraint. I have learned that the ornamentation or the illustration should either be fully capable to stand by itself without the explanatory coöperation of type, or that it should modestly merge its own individuality by becoming an ally of the type in conveying the message of the printed page. If an ally, then the decoration must take its *motif* from the type, for, from the standpoint of the Book, typography is the dominating art.

Again I find myself turning to Cobden-Sanderson's *Ideal Book*, this time not to revel in the balance of its physical *format*, but to take from it, as from the notes of a master, the text which his disciples must always respect:

"The Ideal Book is a composite thing made up of many parts, and may be made beautiful by the beauty of each of its parts . . . in subordination to the whole which collectively they constitute. . . . On the other hand each contributory part may usurp the functions of the rest and of the whole, and growing beautiful beyond all bounds ruin for its own the common cause."

CHAPTER VI

The Clothing of Books

VI

THE CLOTHING OF BOOKS

CHATTING one day, years ago, with the late Dr. Richard Garnett, then Keeper of Printed Books, in his den at the British Museum, I was surprised to have him remark casually that the first bookbinder dated back to the fifth century, and was known as Phillatius the Athenian. Doctor Garnett was in the habit of startling his friends by knowing more about their own subjects than they did themselves, and, what was more humiliating, his knowledge always proved to be so absolute that one hesitated even to challenge him. In the present instance my surprise was so genuine that involuntarily I uttered an exclamation:

"But at that early date books were rolls of papyrus!"

"To be sure," Doctor Garnett admitted good-naturedly, with that smile which so endeared him to his friends — "but fragments have been discovered where the papyrus leaves are perforated at the top and bottom of the left-hand margin, showing that at some time they must have been stitched together with other leaves, even though there is no evidence of a cover. How would you like to see a picture, made in the sixth century, in which volumes are shown bound in the same style as at present?"

Writing a title on a slip of paper, which he handed to an attendant, Doctor Garnett continued his remarks.

"I have sent for a volume containing a facsimile page of the famous *Codex Amiatinus*, which perhaps you have not seen. It is an illuminated manuscript taken from England to Rome in 716 by Ceofrid, Abbot of Wearmouth, intended as a votive offering at the Holy Sepulcher of Saint Peter, and it was probably executed about the middle of the sixth century. I was studying it recently when I came across the picture I want to show you, which confirmed my previous conclusions."

I had heard much about the so-called *Amiatine Bible*, particularly in connection with the resemblance some claim between the figure of the Prophet Ezra and that of Saint Matthew in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Since then I have frequently studied the magnificent original at the Biblioteca Laurenziana at Florence, but at that time the book was only a name. I eagerly awaited the arrival of the facsimile page, and the opportunity to examine it through the eyes of my mentor.

When the huge volume was placed before us, Doctor Garnett turned to the page he had in mind. Here, in a miniature, the artist shows Ezra, the Hebrew scribe, sitting before a book press filled with volumes bound in crimson covers of present-day fashion, and even the book in which Ezra is writing has a binding. Supplementing this evidence, Doctor Garnett summoned as chief witness one Olympiodorus, a Byzantine historian of the early fifth century. This writer records that "an inquiry having suddenly arisen at Athens respecting

the gluing of books, the inquirers desiring to know the measure of the glue, Phillatius, a friend of Olympiodorus, a man well versed in literary matters, explained this, and, having thus gained credit, obtained a public statue from the city."

"The use of glue," Doctor Garnett contended, "could only be for the purpose of pasting sheets into stiff covers"; and he was convinced that he had located the point at which the system of writing on rolls changed to the present book form. The multiplication of sheets by cutting the rolls into leaves would make glue absolutely indispensable.

Doctor Garnett's theory is exceedingly ingenious. It bestows on Phillatius the double distinction of being not only the first bookbinder, but also the only member of his craft who has ever been honored with a public statue!

This conversation came at a time when the whole subject of bookmaking was beginning to unfold before my eyes in a most fascinating way. The message of the illuminated manuscript had come across; the early master printers had assumed a living personality; the types had taken on a new significance; the great typographical triumphs were teaching me their tremendous lesson. Until then I had believed that without practical knowledge of bookbinding the art must remain to me as a foreign language, but for a month Doctor Garnett gave to me of his wisdom, and opened up before me another field for "the Quest." Together we plotted out a chart which during the years that have intervened has enabled me to fit the clothing of books into the great

scheme of the Book itself. I have found it a fascinating adventure to piece together the fragmentary notes I made from time to time for my own use, in tracing the steps through which the cover of a volume came to be an integral part of it, instead of merely a protection and a thing apart. Leaving the technical problems to others, I have discovered romance and history interwoven with the designs and the tools of the binders.

I already knew, of course, that, for several centuries before the invention of printing, volumes, elaborately hand-lettered and illuminated, were encased in sumptuous covers, on which ivory or beaten gold was laid over the boards, inlaid frequently with jewels; and it was obvious that the binding of volumes became a necessity when the printing press multiplied the number of books and made them comparatively common. I found occasional volumes covered with velvet, silk, or some woven fabric, but until within a hundred years leather was the usual material. So long as the natural brown was employed, binders cared little whether this leather came from calf, sheep, doe, pig, seal, kangaroo, or fox. (Dibdin, the famous author of the *Decameron*, records the fact that a certain Doctor Askew once gained notoriety by having a book bound in human skin!) When, however, the demand for color entered into the binding, morocco, made from the skin of the goat, became the favorite material.

Some of the most beautiful of the early examples of bindings on the printed books seemed incomplete because the shelfback was apparently neglected in the scheme of decoration. I had forgotten for the moment

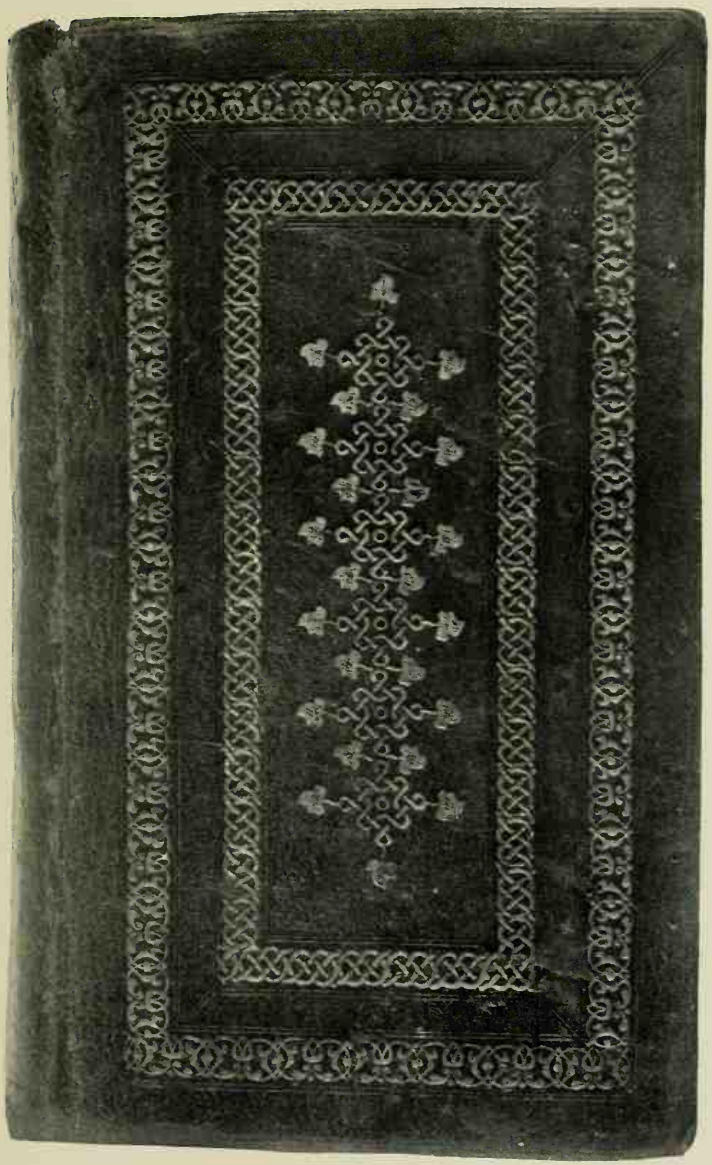
that these volumes were made not to be placed upon shelves, where only the backs are visible, but rather to be laid out flat where the front cover is what first greets the eye. It was Jean Grolier,[1] that famous patron of the Book in the sixteenth century, who first placed letters on the shelfback. Another interesting practice developed from this old custom of laying books flat: the early booklovers felt that the expanse of white on the edges of the book offered too attractive an opportunity for further decoration to be ignored. The burnished gold satisfied them to an extent, but I found occasional volumes with fore-edge painting of great elaboration. Opening the book so that its leaves were fully fanned out, the artist would apply water colors with as little moisture as possible; then, closing the volume, the gold edge was burnished on over the water-color painting. Thus the gold alone showed when the book was closed, but the fore-edge decoration appeared in all its glory in the fanned edges of the open volume.

With the invention and practice of printing, it was natural that the character of bookbinding should change. Aldus and the Aldine Press in Venice stimulated a demand for bindings which should be in keeping with the artistic beauty of the typography and the printed sheets. Printing, "like Minerva, was born fully armed," and the sister art of binding, which clothed the body of the precocious child, could not, in justice, start out on any lower level! Take one of those early examples and, as you caress it, see what an effect the

[1] See also pp. 191, 195.

binder has gained by coördinating a few simple elements, repeated in such a way as to produce an astonishing richness of design: just a few simple tools (cut die-sunk, like a seal, which leave the lines raised) with which the workman plotted out his pattern, all in "blind," by impressing the leather with heated tools, without gold. The leather was usually kept in the natural brown, but sometimes it was stained black or dark olive.

Venice in the fifteenth century was the home of the Book, and thus attracted binders from Arabia and Greece. What could be more natural than that the Aldine covers should reflect in their patterns the designs which clothed the walls of Eastern mosques? Or did Aldus get the idea of corded and dotted borders from the bindings of the manuscripts which flooded Italy after the fall of Constantinople? This influence also suggested the first use of gold, the introduction of which revolutionized the art of binding, and supplied the artist workman with means for further expression of his sense of decoration. But now his tools had to be cut on exactly the opposite principle from those required for "blind" work — for the gold lines had to be depressed below the surface of the leather. The gold leaf was laid on the leather and was fixed in the sunken pattern by the pressure and heat of the metal tool, the superfluous gold leaf being later rubbed off, just as is the practice today, even with stamped bindings. How I have enjoyed studying the knots and the small Aldine leaves surrounded by borders of figured and Arabic knotted work! All so simple, yet so effective — made



AN ALDINE BINDING

"How I have enjoyed studying the knots and the small Aldine leaves, surrounded by borders of figured and Arabic knotted work. All so simple, yet so effective — made by hand with tools fashioned to express the artistic feeling of the binder."

(From Petrarca: Sonetti e Canzoni. *Aldus. Venice*, 1501. *Olive morocco. British Museum.* 7 × 4 *inches.)*

by hand with tools fashioned to express the artistic feeling of the binder.[1] How wonderful that in its infancy the art of binding should have shown principles so basically correct that the intervening centuries could contribute almost nothing to them!

I was particularly struck by the fact that the glory of the Italian binding, which came in the early part of the sixteenth century, should be largely due to the patronage of Jean Grolier,[2] a Frenchman, even as Nicolas Jenson, another Frenchman, added to Italy's early fame in printing. The "Grolier bindings" are so famous that Grolier himself is sometimes spoken of as an early craftsman. He was a scholar and a collector of books, and the volumes that bear his name were executed for him and under his direction, but there is nothing to indicate that he even dabbled in the work himself.

Grolier is a favorite hero of mine. He was born in Lyons in 1479, but his family came from Verona, so he scarcely felt himself a foreigner when he succeeded his father as Treasurer of the Duchy of Milan under Louis XII. He was but thirty-one years old at this time, yet he had already developed a passionate love for books and an uncanny vision of what constituted a well-made volume.[3] Two years later he met the patriarchal Aldus Manutius, and from that moment began the younger man's friendly patronage of the Aldine Press. Grolier came to know Andrea de Torresani,

[1] See Plate at p. 190. [2] See also pp. 189, 195.

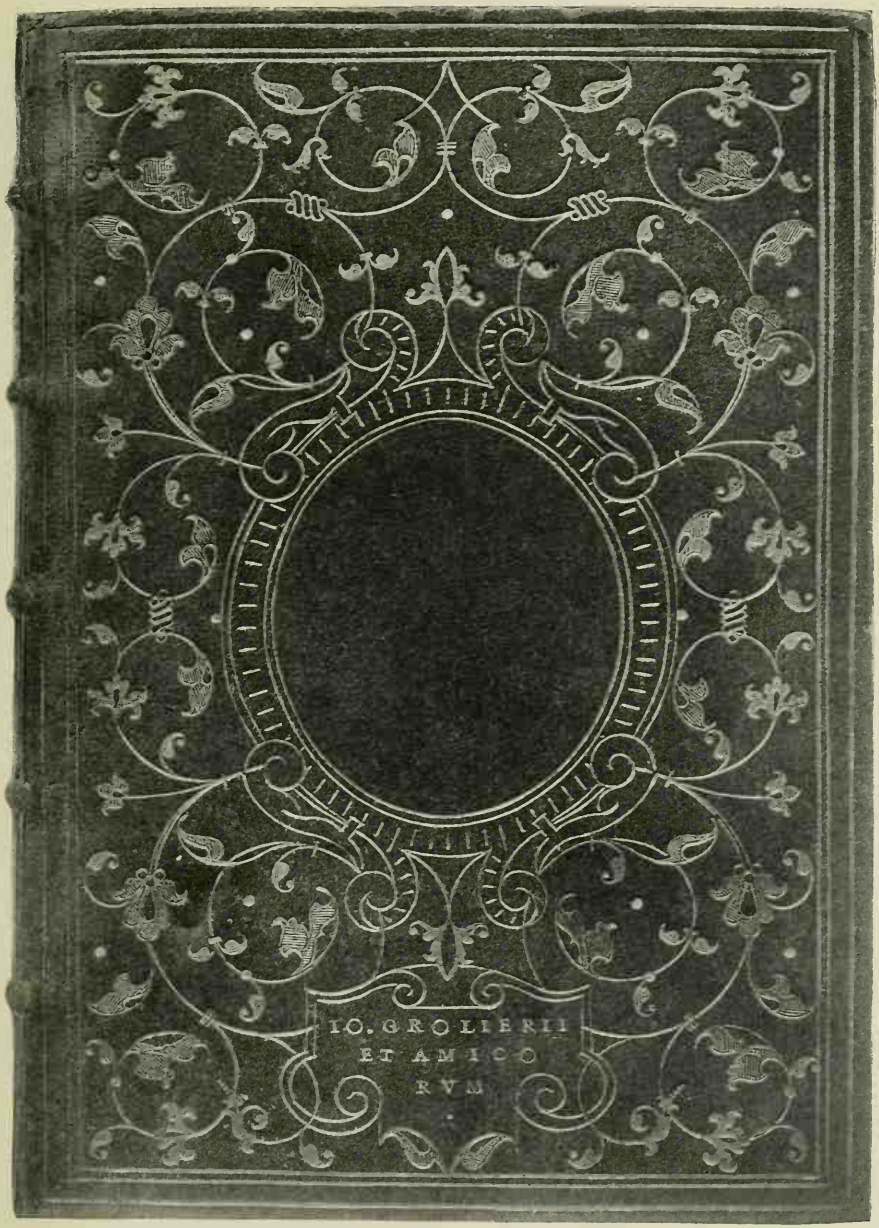
[3] See letter from Grolier to Francesco, giving minute instructions to the printer, on page 215, *In Quest of the Perfect Book*, by William Dana Orcutt, 1926.

father-in-law of Aldus, and thus became intimate with Andrea's two sons, Francesco and Ferderico. Several volumes from the Aldine Press were dedicated to Grolier in grateful acknowledgment of his financial assistance in times of stress, and wide-margin copies of all the Aldine publications were reserved for his library.

With the books well printed, Grolier's next concern was to clothe them properly, and the volumes which bear on their front cover the inscription IO. GROLIERII ET AMICORUM represent the best of the Italian art. This interesting legend conveys Grolier's understanding of what a book should be — not a thing simply to be acquired, but a living message to be absorbed and shared. To make sure that his friends should be able to enjoy with him the volumes he loved, Grolier's library of some 8000 volumes contained several copies of the same title, similarly bound, which were freely distributed to such fellow booklovers as Marc Lauwrin, Christophe de Thou, Maioli, Claude du Puy, and Geoffroi Tory. In his *Champfleury*, Tory[1] records the fact that while he was dreaming on his bed "and revolving my memory, thinking of a thousand little fancies, serious and gay, I thought of some antique letters I had made for Monseigneur the Treasurer for War, Master Jehan Grolier, counsellor and secretary of our lord the King, amateur of fine letters," which makes it possible that the great French artist and engraver is responsible for some of the Grolier patterns.

The volumes in Grolier's library, in his Paris residence, the Hôtel de Lyon, near the Porte de Buci, were

[1] See p. 22.



A LATER GROLIER BINDING

Showing the azured (shaded) tools and the flowing scroll work in a graceful arabesque design.

(From Aeneae vici in vetera imperatorum Romanorum numismata commentarii. *The Aldi. Venice*, 1560. *Olive brown morocco. British Museum.* $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ *inches.)*

the first known to have been especially executed for a private individual. They were covered with the finest quality of reddish-brown or olive-green morocco from Africa and the Levant, secured for the fastidious *connoisseur* by that famous merchant, Jehan Colombel, of Avignon; or with brown calf of equally high grade, sometimes mottled with black. With the exception of one manuscript, the books were all printed, and included the best of the classical and Italian authors. After Grolier's death the library remained forgotten for over a century. When it was disposed of at last by Grolier's descendants, in 1676, Esprit Fléchier, Bishop of Nismes, secured ten volumes, which, in turn, were sold in England in 1725 together with Fléchier's other books. This was the first appearance of the Grolier volumes in the market, and they brought ridiculously low prices until after 1800, when their real value began to be appreciated. Of the eight thousand copies, only 350 titles have been traced.

My first intimate acquaintance with the Grolier bindings came years ago through my old friend, Dr. Guido Biagi. We were together one day in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence, of which he was then librarian, and were talking of binding in general. I asked him what example he considered most characteristic of the best Italian work. Without a moment's hesitation he replied,

"One here in this library, done for Grolier. I will show it to you."

Presently the attendant returned with the volume in his hand.

"This," said Biagi, handing it to me, "will interest you beyond the binding, for it is the identical manuscript from which the first edition of Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* was set at the Aldine Press in 1528. — See," he added, pointing to the first page, "there is Grolier's name, written by Paulus Manutius, and the instructions to the compositor!"

I took it reverently in my hands, studying the written characters of the old sixteenth-century author, which were to create such a sensation when they finally appeared in book form. There were the words *In maiuscule* written in the Aldine office four hundred years ago, telling the compositor to set the first line in capital letters; and the inscription, also written by Aldus' son Paulus, *per Monsr Grolier, Tresorer.*[1]

The manuscript has a story all its own. It was presented to Grolier by the Venetian printers in recognition of his great services to their craft, and he gratefully enclosed it in a fitting cover. Later the volume was catalogued in the Bibliothèque de Carpentras, at Lyons, but in 1842 it disappeared. Eventually, this identical manuscript was purchased by a Monsieur Yemeniz of Lyons for about 500 francs from M. Libri-Carucci. Inasmuch as Monsieur Libri had been inspector of libraries, there was a strong enough presumption of appropriation to warrant a criminal charge being brought against him. After various vicissitudes, and after passing through several hands, the volume came into the possession of Lord Ashburnham. Fortunately it was returned to Italy when the Italian government, in 1884,

[1] See Plate on opp. page.

IN MAIVSCVLE.

IL PRIMO LIBRO DEL CORTEGIANO
del conte Baldesar Castiglione a M. Alphonso
Ariosto

Fra me stesso lungamente ho dubitato M.
Alphonso car.mo, qual di due cose piu difficil mi fosse,
o il negarui quel, che có tanta instantia piu uolte m'ha
uete richiesto, o il farlo: pch da un canto mi parea du-
rissimo negar alcuna cosa, e massimamente laudeuole
a persona, ch'io amo sómamente, e da cui sómamente mi
sento esser amato: dall'altro canto pigliar impresa, la
quale io nó conoscessi, poter condur a fi-
ne, pareami disconuenirsi a chi estimasse le giuste re-
prensioni quanto estimar si debbano. In ultimo dopo
molti pensieri ho deliberato esprimentare in qsto quato
aiuto porger possa alla diligentia mia quella affettio-
ne e desiderio intenso de compiacere, ch ne l'altre cose
tanto sole accrescer la industria degli hominis. Voi dúq
mi richiedete ch'io scriua qual sia al parer mio quella
forma perfetta di cortegiania ch piu si conuenga a
gentilhomo, ch uiua in corte de Principi: e ch possa

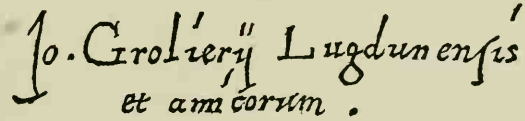
per Mons.r Grolier Thesorer.

A XVI CENTURY MANUSCRIPT PAGE

This is the first page of the manuscript from which the Aldine Press set Castiglione's *Cortegiano* in 1528. At the top, in the handwriting of Paulus Manutius, are instructions for the compositor, "in maiuscule," and at the foot is the inscription "per Mons.r Grolier, tresorer." *(Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.* 11 × 8 *inches.)*

purchased nearly two thousand manuscripts from Lord Ashburnham, and placed them in the Biblioteca Laurenziana at Florence.

As a matter of fact, I consider other volumes more instructive than this in comparing the tools used on the Aldine, the Grolier, and on the volumes bound for



Autograph of Jean Grolier

that mysterious *connoisseur* of the same period, Tommaso Maioli. Except for his wonderful library, this name would be entirely unknown, yet because of it Maioli is an imposing though mythical figure in the Kingdom of Books. Whoever he was, he appropriated Grolier's idea of an inscription on the covers of his books, and the words THO. MAIOLI ET AMICORUM appear on some of the most beautiful of existing volumes. The fact that Maioli examples were found in Grolier's library, and Grolier bindings in Maioli's collection, would seem to indicate that these two great friends of the Book were at least known to each other.

However this may be, the volumes bound for Aldus, Grolier, and Maioli constitute the well-substantiated claim of Italy to supremacy in the art during the fifteenth and well into the sixteenth century. Each style is distinctively individual yet each is reminiscent of the other two. The early Aldine tools[1] were solid, like the

[1] See Plate at p. 190.

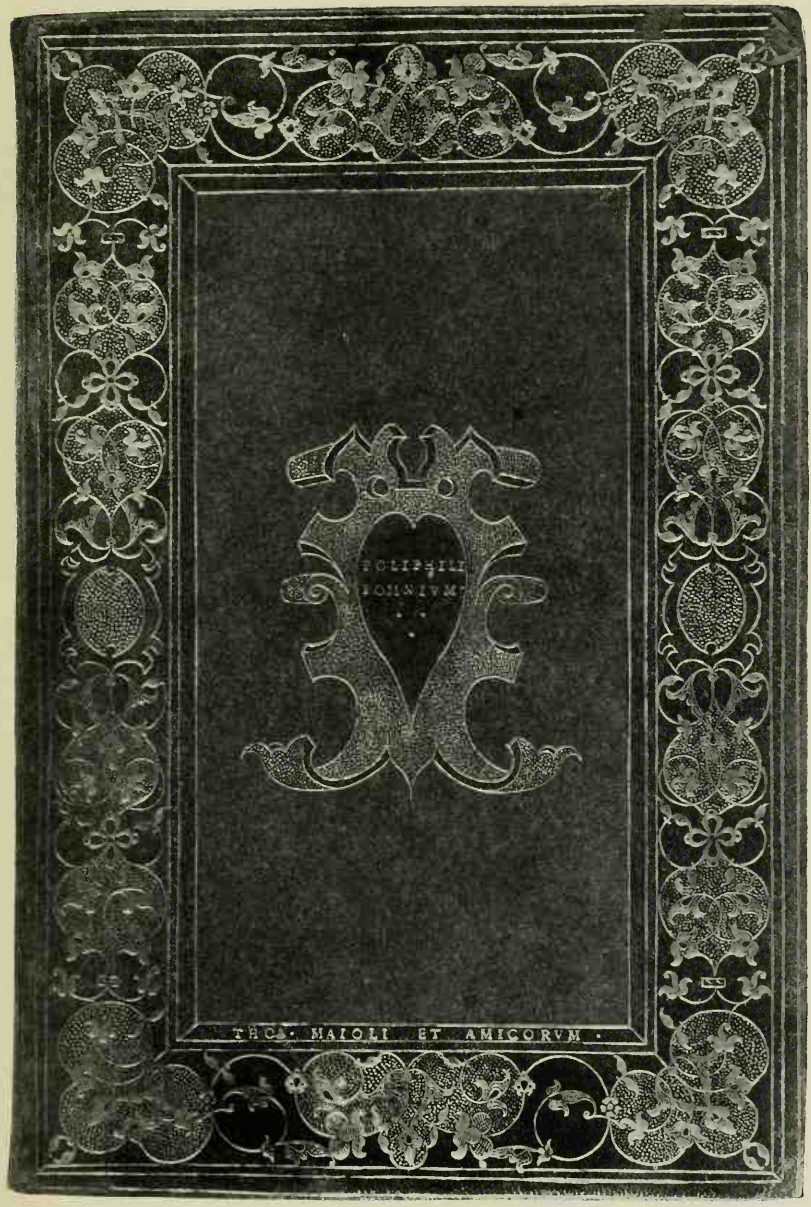
type used upon his presses; Maioli cut these also in outline, while Grolier, taking a middle ground, used shaded or so-called azured[1] tools. These are used profusely on the cover of the *Cortegiano*. Maioli's designs[2] show flowing scroll-work, beautifully executed, with graceful curves interlaced with the framework. This framework consists of curves instead of the characteristic geometric lines[3] used by Grolier. Maioli frequently enriched his background with dots; on the Grolier covers the interlaced framework is made the design itself, and a mosaic effect is secured by coloring or inlaying the band spaces between the lines. In his later bindings, he introduced flaming scroll work resembling that on the Maioli covers. Or did Maioli copy Grolier?

The tooling on the early Italian bindings, freely executed, occasionally results in broken joints. This has been a subject of some criticism, particularly on the part of later French binders; but is it not the inevitable slight variation in hand work that robs it of the monotony seen in the precision of machine stamping, and does this not add to the charm? "Thou must observe," said Marcus Aurelius, "that whatsoever it is that naturally doth happen to things natural, hath somewhat in itself that is pleasing and attractive."

When a people have developed such a super-standard in manners and customs as had the Italians of the fifteenth century, with patrons such as the Medici, Orsini, d'Este, della Roveri, and the Gonzagas, to say

[1] This word comes from the practice in heraldry of representing the tincture blue in uncolored drawings by shading in horizontal lines.

[2] See Plate on opp. page. [3] See Plate on p. 197.



A MAIOLI BINDING

Maioli frequently enriched his backgrounds with dots, and his designs show flowing scroll work, beautifully executed, with graceful curves interlaced with the framework.

(From Hypnerotomachia Poliphili. *Aldus. Venice*, 1499. *Dark olive morocco. British Museum.* $12\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ *inches.)*

A CHARACTERISTIC GROLIER DESIGN
Showing the geometric lines Grolier made famous.

A FRANÇOIS I BINDING

This sumptuous monarch took the covers of the book under his generous patronage, thus enabling the French gilders to develop their art. Gold was used on the edges of volumes for the first time. The salamander in flames was François' special mark.

(From Xenophontis de Cyri Minoris Expeditione. *Brown morocco. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.* $12\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ *inches.)*

nothing of the Popes and the Cardinals, art could not do less than produce Michelangelo, and Da Vinci, and Raphael; printing had to have its Aldus; and binding its master workmen whose names unhappily are all too slightly recorded. Even when the decadence set in, in the sixteenth century, the style established by Italian artist binders dominated all European work in taste and design for nearly a century.

France filched preëminence in the art of binding from Italy just as she had earlier taken from her the supremacy in the art of printing; and she held it for over two centuries. By the middle of the sixteenth century all originality had disappeared from the Italian bindings, and workmanship deteriorated. Italy was content to have supplied the basic principles and the inspiration for what became in France a veritable fine art. It was only in France that binding was encouraged as an art and practiced continuously from the time of the Renaissance down to the period of the French Revolution. The expeditions of Charles VIII and Louis XII into Italy had given the French ample opportunities to appreciate the beauties of the Italian bindings, which they were not slow to appropriate. The early French work, except for the elaboration of the gilders, was based flatly upon these Italian models, and in spite of constant effort, it was nearly a century before French workmen succeeded in developing a national style.

That sumptuous monarch, François I, included the covers of the book in his generous patronage, and encouraged the Royal binders to compete with the

private volumes still being bound for that prince of booklovers, Jean Grolier[1] — but now in Paris instead of Venice. In fact, many of the identical ornaments were employed, the Grolier inscription in the center of the cover being matched by the arms of France. The books executed for the King are more elaborate, for expense meant nothing to the luxurious François. There was gold enough and to spare, and this was drawn upon freely to enable the French gilders to develop their art. This profligacy led them, for the first time in the history of the art, to extend the use of gold even to the edges of books — the only French innovation Grolier ever accepted. The Royal covers possess a marked similarity — the floriated and interlaced fillets, within a border; the panel dotted with the crowned F and the fleur-de-lys; the King's arms stamped in the center, and the Royal device of the salamander in flames usually placed below.[2]

While François was pursuing his own devious ways, and Grolier was steadfastly adhering to the principles he had learned in Italy, the splendid bindings of Geoffroi Tory[3] flashed into competition. This artist made his impression on almost every element that entered into the building of books in his period. Everything he touched gave evidence of his taste and skill. The *Petrarch*[4] in the British Museum is a splendid expression of himself on the cover of a book. The volume was printed in Venice in 1525, brought into France in sheets, after the custom of the times, and was fortunate

[1] See also pp. 189, 191, 195.
[2] See Plate at p. 198.
[3] See also p. 21.
[4] See Plate on opp. page.

A GEOFFROI TORY BINDING

The beautiful border which encloses the panel is filled with arabesque ornamentation, in which is introduced Tory's famous "broken pitcher" device. This was used on the sheets or the covers he glorified.

(From Petrarca: Opera. *The Aldi. Venice*, 1525. *Olive morocco. British Museum.* 8½ × 6 *inches.)*

enough to be selected by Tory to receive his finishing touches. He supplied the designs for the stamps just as he provided drawings for decorations which appear in books on which his mark appears; but there seems to be no reason to think that he had anything more to do with the actual binding than to direct its execution.

In this volume the chief decoration of the boards consists of stamps forming arabesque panels. The *motifs* are clearly traceable to Italian sources, but the designs themselves express the originality and personality of the artist. There is no need of signature: in the lower portion of the decoration that fills the center panel, Tory has worked in his famous mark, the *pot cassé*,[1] as a part of the arabesque.

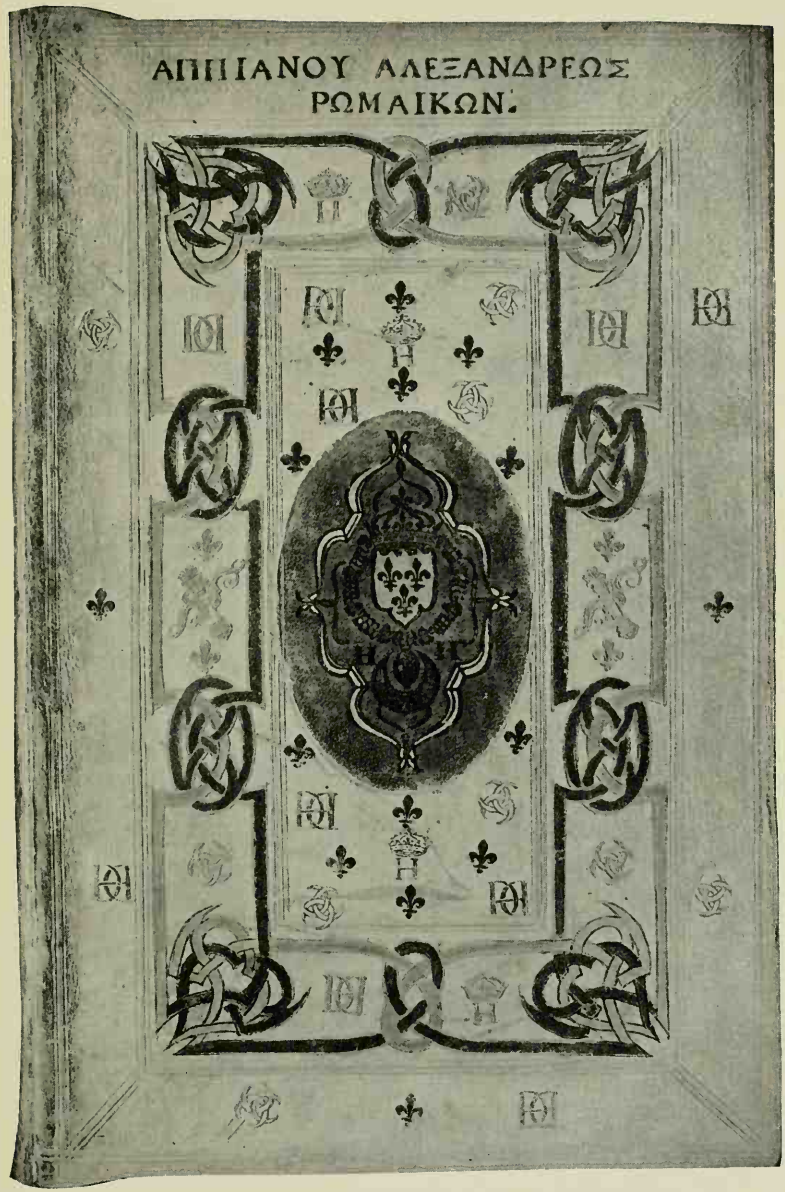
Some bindings call vividly to my mind interesting personages and events, none more so than those executed for Diane de Poitiers. The last time I went to Reims I had three definite objectives: to stand in mute tribute before the tragic beauty of the martyred Cathedral; to enjoy the intriguing *crêpes Susette* at the Savoy; and to renew my acquaintance with a disclosing binding in the Town Library. At first glance there is little to suggest historical interest in this volume. At the top of the front cover are stamped the arms of the House of Brézé, impaling those of Poitiers — a common enough practice of recording the union of two families, and in this case referring to Diane de Poitier's marriage to Louis de Brézé, Comte de Maulevrier, Grand Seneschal of Normandy. It was the device of an arrow, encircled by laurel, with the inscription

[1] See also on p. 25.

Sola vivit in illa, below the arms, that first attracted my attention. Somewhere, at some time, I had seen an *almost* similar binding, and the variation, slight as it was, suggested further inquiry.

Diane was married at the tender age of thirteen, and was left a widow at thirty-two. She was a real lover of books, and her collection, unhappily dispersed by sale during the eighteenth century, showed a discerning sense and an appreciation of the beautiful. Some say that the best of her bindings were designed for her by Bernhard Salomon of Lyons, who made drawings for her jewels. Her device was the bow and crescent, symbolic of her name, but upon the death of her husband Diane added an arrow and laurel to her device, so arranged as to seem rising from a tomb, and the legend *Sola vivit in illo*. It was a volume bearing this earlier inscription that I recalled. When, seven years later, the charming young widow attracted the devotion of the youthful Dauphin of France, she found the device and the motto somewhat incongruous. By eliminating the tomb, and cleverly changing the gender of the pronoun, "Alone, she lives in him" became "He lives in her alone," and the fair lady thus satisfied her scruples and relieved her embarrassment.

While François I lived, Diane shared with Madame d'Étampes the controlling influence in the gorgeous Court of that superficial but brilliant monarch, and she did not overlook the personal advantage of furthering the old King's desire to stand in history as the Maecenas of the arts. She was known to the Court as the *Chasseresse des Bouquins*. Upon his father's



BINDING MADE FOR DIANE DE POITIERS AND HENRI II

The clever mistress of Henri II was a great booklover, and was known to the Court as the *Chasseresse des Bouquins*. The two D's reversed and interlaced with an H, and the crescent moons, still proclaim the hold she maintained upon the young and impressionable King.

(From a copy of Étienne's Royal Greeks. *Paris*, 1550. *Carved edges, dark brown morocco, inlaid with grey, brown, and red in center panel, and strap work. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.* $13\frac{3}{4} \times 9$ *inches.)*

death, the Dauphin became Henri II, and Diane was created Duchesse de Valentinois. Then the new Duchess dropped the former pretense and equivocation to become the real ruler of France. Madame d'Étampes was promptly exiled. Even the young Queen, the clever Catherine de' Medici, found it advisable to accept an armed truce, while her husband and his popular mistress gave splendid commissions to the binders of the period. As a result of this stimulus French covers, never wholly free from Italian reminiscence, began to show signs of a distinct nationality. These joint productions[1] may still be seen at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the cipher formed by the two D's reversed and interlaced with an H, the crescent moons — still proclaiming to the world, through the lasting medium of books, the hold maintained by this clever woman upon the youthful and impressionable King. What stories some of these volumes tell!

In the meantime, Jean Grolier[2] had replaced Charles du Plessis as Treasurer-General of France, an office he held successively during the reigns of François I, Henri II, François II, and Charles IX. He had been called home in 1535 (some say earlier), and he brought with him the Italian binder who had long been a member of his household. Imagine having one's own bookbinder to give to exquisitely printed sheets the finishing touch by adding a binding approved or perhaps even designed by oneself! With his Italian ancestry and his French breeding, it is easy to understand why the later Grolier bindings, executed during the period of

[1] See Plate at p. 202.

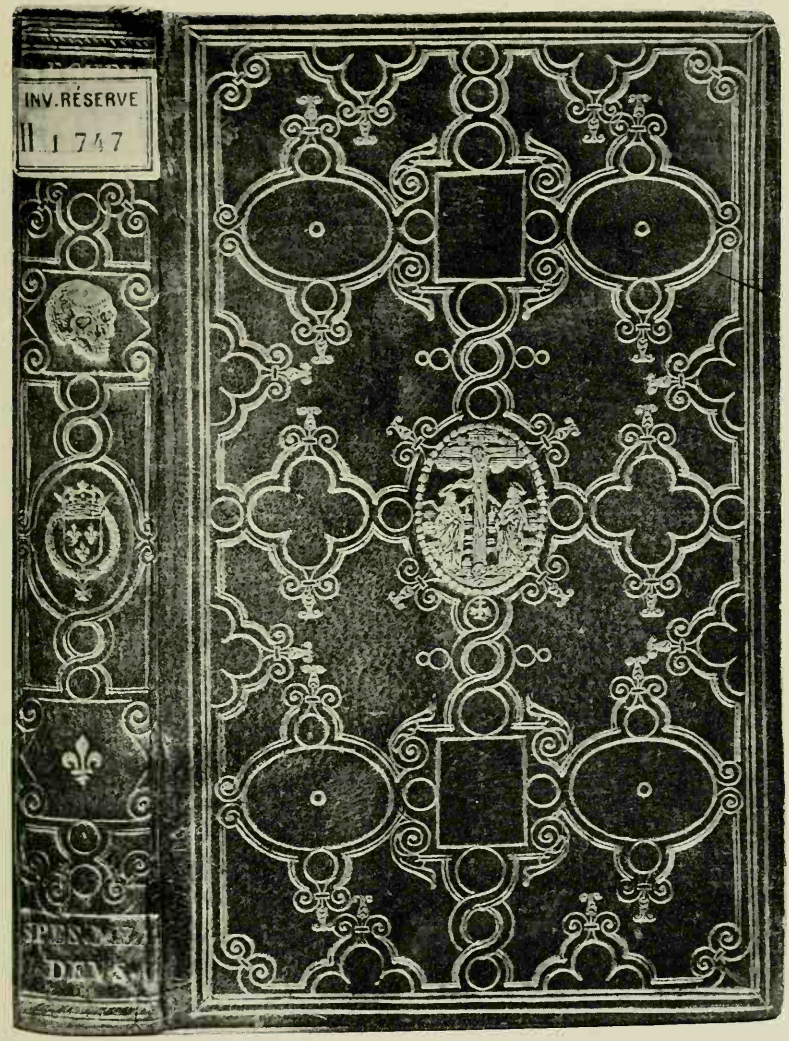
[2] See also pp. 189, 191, 195.

François I and Henri II, should display so rare a combination of Italian principles of design and French refinement in workmanship.[1] The simplicity of every element, the relation of each part to every other part, the freedom in execution — all resulted in producing examples which will ever remain in a class quite by themselves.

Sometimes I wonder whether Grolier's idea of keeping all the bindings in his library harmonious in design and shade is responsible for the still-continuing practice in France for booklovers to affect a single color for the covers of their volumes. The untrimmed, paper-bound French editions would be meaningless in England or America, but when the purchaser intends to rebind in his own style the *format* has a utilitarian purpose.

I like to pick out bindings from 1560, when Charles IX succeeded his brother, François II, down to the beginning of the seventeenth century, which show the continuing but futile efforts made by the French binders to free themselves from Italian traditions and to create a truly national style. Italian craftsmanship was on the wane, while in France the workmen used their tools with great delicacy and dexterity. Had the French binders realized that the principles on which the Italian work rested were basic rather than national, and devoted all their efforts toward demonstrating their superiority of workmanship, they would have come into their own years earlier, and thus advanced the art of binding that much the more. As it was, these craftsmen seemed to think that if they adapted some medieval

[1] See Plate at p. 192.



THE LUGUBRIOUS BINDINGS OF HENRI III

The melancholy skulls and the symbols of the Passion expressed Henri III's grief over the death of his sweetheart, the Princesse de Condé. He lived only in the Kingdom of Books.

(Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

device, some one single figure, like a fleur-de-lys or a tongue of flame, repeating it over and over again upon the upper board, they could claim originality. So they might, but originality does not necessarily create a national style. Sometimes the field of the board is divided into compartments by floriated fillets, and the spaces thus left are filled with laurel, or by birds or flowers. But whatever one may think of the design, he can but revel in the superb workmanship.

The turn really came, curiously enough, with Henri III — that lugubrious monarch for whom I had never held the slightest respect or sympathy until the Nicolas Ève bindings proved to me once again that books disclose personalities far more unerringly than historical archives. History describes Henri III as an indolent pleasure-lover, so effeminate that he dressed in women's clothes, made a collection of little dogs, and hid himself in terror at the sound of thunder — yet it also tells us that he received the mortal wound from Jacques Clement's dagger without flinching, and that he displayed superb fortitude when he recognized Henri de Navarre as his successor. On the bindings of his volumes are alternating skulls[1] and fleurs-de-lys, or the symbols of the Passion, the choice of which is attributed by history to his religious fanaticism and his unassertive personality — yet he calmly brushes Henri de Guise aside by means of an assassin's dagger when annoyed by the latter's popularity. Here seems to be contradictory evidence, but history is content to let it go at that.

[1] See Plate at p. 204.

His books give me a more intimate picture. His mother, Catherine de' Medici, one of the most powerful and unscrupulous characters in history, was thwarted in her ambitions as Queen through the power Diane de Poitiers exercised over her husband, Henri II, and her personality found full expression in dominating the lives of her sons. In 1573, when it seemed unlikely that the Duc d'Anjou would ever become King of France, she secured his election to the throne of Poland, which he assumed against his will, brokenhearted because this separated him from Marie, Princesse de Condé, the great love of his life. The death of his brother, Charles IX, brought him back to France, but Marie had died during his absence; and from that moment Henri took no interest in anything but his books. In the melancholy symbols upon his covers he found expression for his grief and his despair. On one volume gilt skulls appear in the midst of tears and fleurs-de-lys; he directed that the words *Memento mori* be inscribed in the center of the design, and below it, on one cover, the name *Jesus*; on the other that of the beloved *Marie*. Somehow, with all the weaknesses attributed to him, he begins to attract my sympathy.

Then the distraught youth, worn down by the constant domination of his powerful mother, finds his only solace in encouraging richness and elegance in the binding of books. Catherine was content to let him play with these harmless baubles while she controlled the weightier affairs of State. Finding himself undisturbed at last, he makes his little gesture of authority by decreeing, in 1577, that title pages may be printed in gold,

NICOLAS ÈVE'S EXPRESSION OF HIMSELF

This great French binder not only executed many of the lugubrious designs of Henri III, but also produced some beautiful examples of gold tooling executed in the *fanfare* manner. He and his brother Clovis were the first to treat the two sides and the shelfback of a book as a unit.

(From Valerii Maximi Dictorum. *Antwerp*, 1574. *Red morocco. British Museum.* $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ *inches.)*

that the edges of books may be gilded, and the lines of arabesque traced in gold; but that massive plaques of gold must no longer be attached to the covers. Later, Henri forbade the bourgeois to wear precious stones in their dress, but allowed them to enrich the bindings of their devotional volumes with not more than four diamonds; the nobility might use five. The pathetic figure lived only in the Kingdom of Books!

In spite of all this, Henri III, consciously or otherwise, brought his influence to bear in the direction of better taste in French bindings, and thus took a definite step forward toward the expression of a distinctive French style. Nicolas Ève[1] contributed much in crystallizing this, ably assisted by his brother, Clovis Ève, who later became Binder to King Henri IV. They secured originality particularly in their treatment of foliage, and were the first to consider the two sides of a book and its shelfback as a unit in design and execution.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century there came a realization that this distinctive French style could be secured only by reverting from the elaboration that had crept into it to the simplicity of the early Italian style — yet in that simplicity to express national characteristics. Le Gascon marks the conscious beginning of this new era. This appellation is a nickname which conceals rather than reveals the great artist binder of the period. Some think, owing to a certain similarity between his work and that of Florimond Badier, that the two men are the same; but

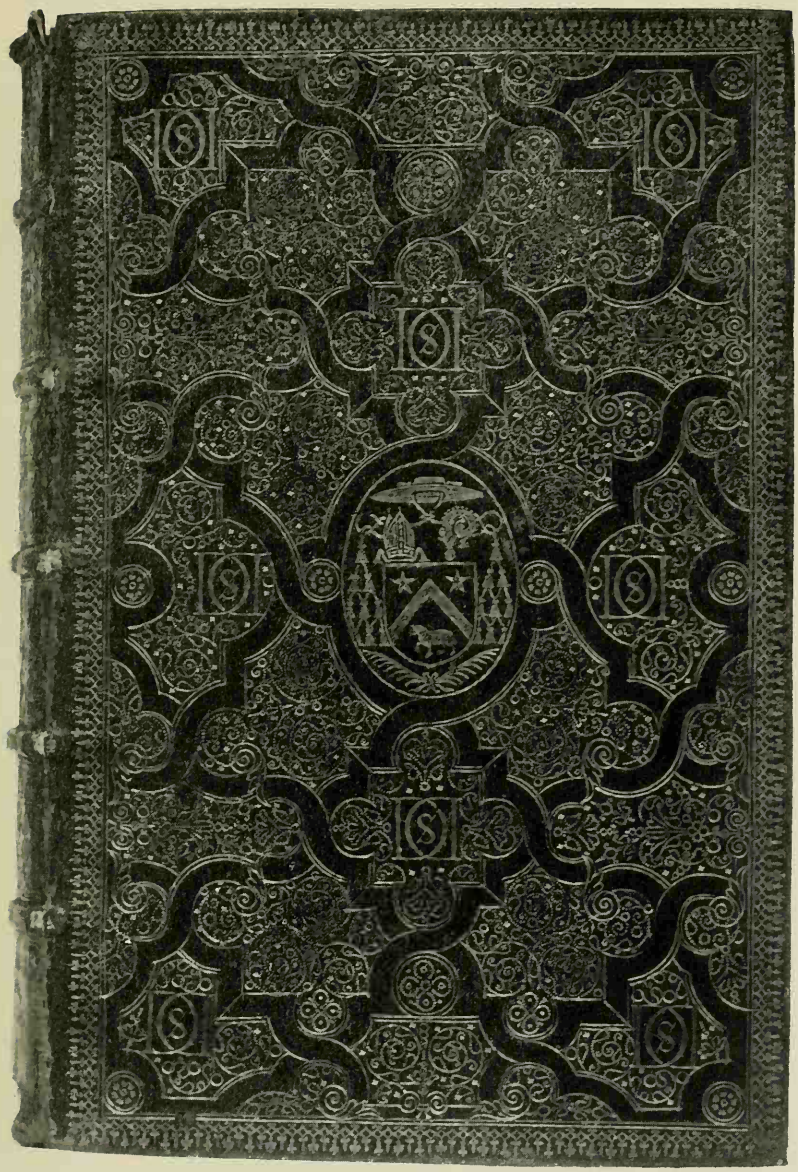
[1] See Plate at p. 206.

a consideration of the dates involved makes it more likely that Le Gascon was really Jean Gillede, whose daughter Badier married.

Whatever the identity, it was Le Gascon who produced the most charming examples of the early seventeenth century. The basis of his designs was the *fanfare* style, but so ingenious was his arrangement and so delicate were his tools that "fanfare" took on a new significance. This style, which flourished in France at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, took its name, quite by accident, from a volume entitled *Les Fanfares et Courvées Abbadesques*, owned by Charles Nordier, and the first to be bound in this design. The style itself was a protest against the melancholy bindings of Henri III, the gloomy skulls and symbols of the Passion now being replaced by flowers and foliage and delicate decorations, used in rich profusion. Later the style became more elaborate and involved, and the flowers more dainty and profuse. In the seventeenth century there is greater variety in the sprays of foliage, which alternate with palms, while vases and roulettes fill the compartments.

At first Le Gascon used a limited number of dotted foliage and other tools associated with the seventeenth century, but he gradually increased the use of gold dottings, which, in his best work, dominate the ground on which the other patterns are displayed with striking effect. He particularly excelled in gilding.

A splendid example, attributed to Le Gascon, is the *Guirlande de Julie*, which was placed upon the toilet table of Mademoiselle de Rambouillet as a New Year's



A MASTERPIECE OF LE GASCON

Le Gascon, the great French binder, whose identity has never been established, gave a new significance to the *fanfare* style by the delicacy of his tools and the beauty of his designs.

(From Liber Ordinis Pontificales. *Brown morocco. British Museum.* $9\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ *inches.)*

gift by her friends in 1633. The madrigals it contained were composed by the most brilliant wits of the day; they were transcribed by Nicolas Jarry, and embellished with symbolic flowers by Nicolas Robert at a hundred francs a page. Le Gascon completed this *récherché* New Year's gift by enclosing it in a cover made of Levantine morocco "within and without — a most unusual thing," as Tallemont records. And on both covers, also within and without, the artist binder cleverly placed a profusion of J's in honor of the fair recipient's Christian name.

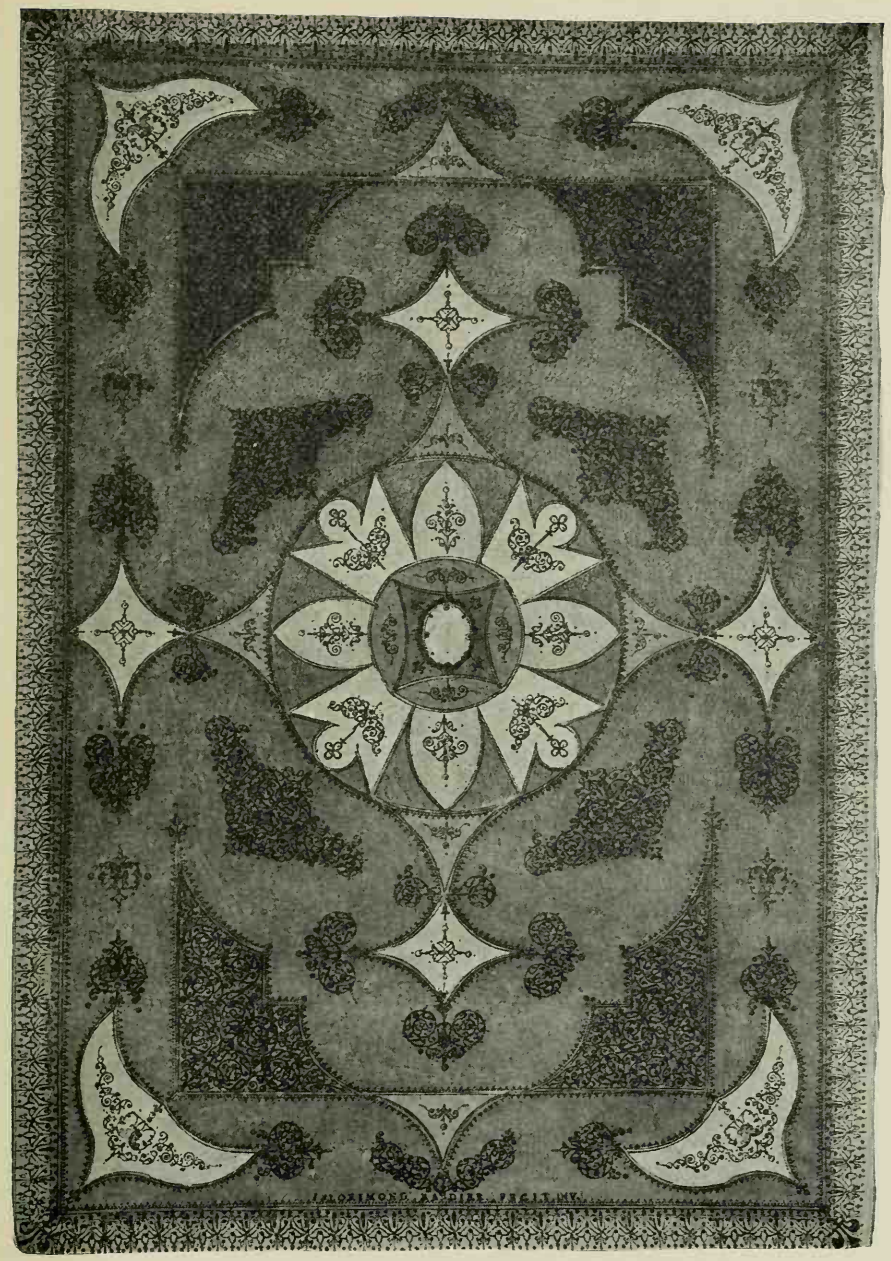
The two bindings signed by Badier[1] are of later date. The similarity between the Badier and the Le Gascon covers consists of a repetition of certain figured tools which seem to be common to both. Badier broke up his boards into compartments, just as did Nicolas Ève, but in place of the laurel branches, birds, or flowers, he filled these spaces with conventional figure work, and many of his volumes were inlaid with much skill and clever workmanship.

The seventeenth century is an interesting period in which to browse among the French binders. In it is sung the swan song of design in France. I like to turn to one of the lovely covers made for Anne of Austria by Antoine Ruette, whose father, Macé Ruette, is said to have invented yellow marbled morocco and marbled paper. Many of Antoine's bindings enriched the libraries of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, and the best of the beautiful examples in the Chancellor Ségurier's collection are attributed to him. I like to hold in

[1] See Plate at p. 210.

my hand some volume bound by Luc Antoine Boyet, Antoine Ruette's successor as Binder to Louis XIV, and to admire his splendid *doublé* work, a style of lining the inside of the boards with leather which Badier had originated and Boyer made popular. From this point, bookbinding in France was practiced as a craft rather than as an art.

In studying French bindings I was frankly surprised that the French workmen remained content for so long a time after simplicity was made a basic principle of their style; for the Latin temperament always approaches a change with the optimistic idea that it must be for the better. Yet from Le Gascon down to the end of the seventeenth century experiment was happily abandoned. But when Padeloup le Jeune, the most famous of a family devoted to the craft since 1650, succeeded Boyet as Royal Binder, he realized that binding was on the wane, and aspired to establish a new national style. He conceived the idea of combining the designs from the glass painting of the Middle Ages, the suns and the flowers of the Louis XIV period, and Le Gascon's fine gold dottings. This mixture did not work out with marked success, but Padeloup's *dentelle* border, made up of lace-like dottings formed by the repeated impressions of a single tool, and requiring exceedingly delicate workmanship and rare accuracy in manual execution, was a fascinating exhibition of genius. I wish this binder might have continued to develop this style, for it possesses infinite possibilities in the hands of so skilful a workman as Padeloup; but unfortunately he soon dropped it



FLORIMOND BADIER'S TREATMENT OF A COVER

This binder is thought by some to have been Le Gascon, but the confusion is probably due to the similarity of tools. This plate is from one of two known bindings signed by Badier.

(From De Imitatione Christi, 1640. *Red morocco, inlaid with green and brown. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.* $15\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ *inches.)*

and devoted himself to inlaid bindings, for which the debased demand at that time was incessant.

Jacques Antoine Derôme[1] was a contemporary and rival of Padeloup. While he added nothing new to the *dentelle* pattern, he showed himself a sounder binder. The charming design of a bird with outstretched wings marks most of his beautiful examples.

From this date, 1750, down to the French Revolution, which effectually stopped development in all the arts, the earlier and more decadent elaboration was expressed in inlaid bindings. In these the workmanship is so much superior to the taste! The volumes are admirably fitted to be placed in my lady's boudoir, but seem entirely out of keeping in a library made up of serious volumes.

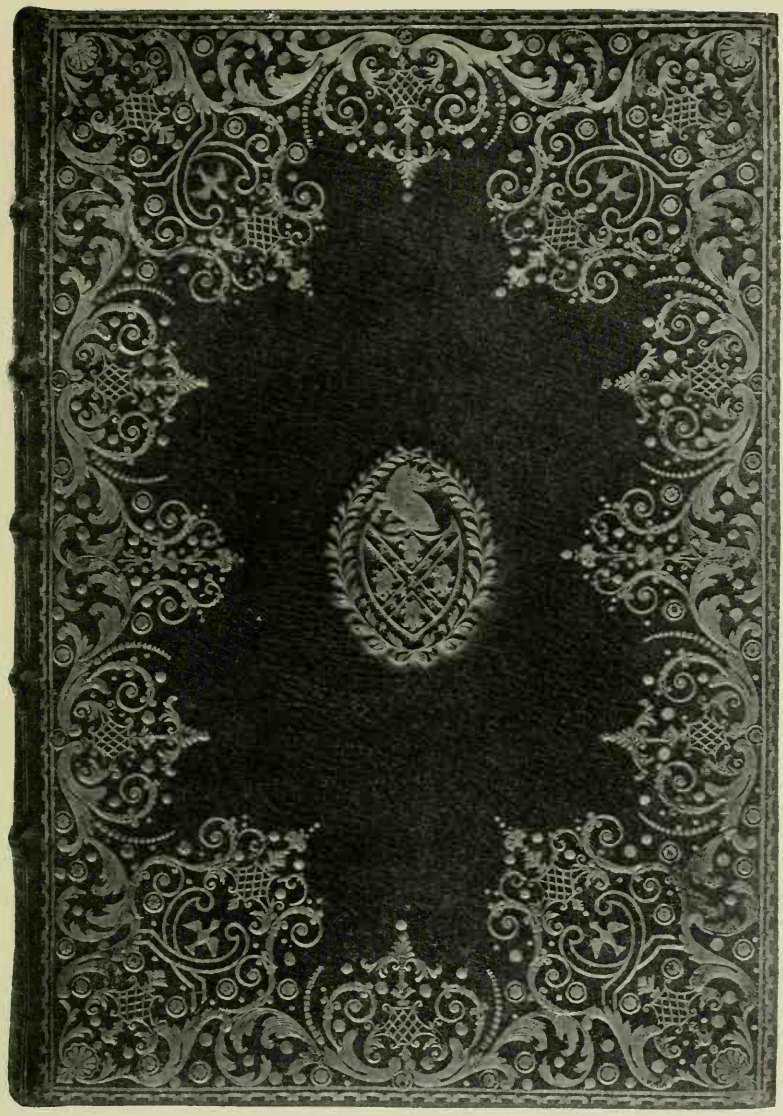
The great merit of the French bindings lies in the marvelous skill developed by their gilders. While kept under restraint, gold tooling adds intriguing beauty to a cover, but many famous examples of the art in France demonstrate that some binders failed to realize that by its very nature gold tooling is a restricted form of expression, requiring consummate taste and instinctive feeling to prevent its limitations from dominating its merits.

To those of us of Anglo-Saxon blood, who pride ourselves upon our present contribution to the Book, it is salutary to go back and contemplate how slowly the art developed in England. It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that John Baskerville issued

[1] See Plate at p. 212.

his splendid *Virgil* — and this was the first time England could claim to have produced the best-made book of its period! There were comparatively few private libraries in England even as late as the sixteenth century, and during the reign of Henry VIII so many Italian books were imported that English printers and binders, alarmed for their very existence, finally secured the passage of the Act of 1533 to protect their interests. Gold tooling had been practiced in Venice for over fifty years before it was introduced into England — in the shop of Thomas Berthelet, Pynson's successor as Printer and Stationer to the King. These early English bindings were nothing but imitations of the Italian, the tools being of the same patterns as those used on the early Aldine bindings, worked on brown leather made of calfskin or deerskin.

The volumes which followed the Berthelet bindings are of poorer quality because the early ones were at least based upon fine models. During the Elizabethan period the binding appears to have been left in the hands of the Queen's Printers, and these examples are of greater historic than artistic interest. The binders tried to imitate the Lyonnese school, using stamps and azured corner pieces, and introducing original designs quite out of harmony with the general scheme. Queen Elizabeth had many books bound in velvet and embroidered with gold or silver clasps, sometimes having precious stones or pearls set in the covers. Some of these volumes are exquisite examples of the jeweler's art, but reflect no special credit upon the binder.



A *DENTELLE* BINDING BY DERÔME

Derôme took the *dentelle* style of Padeloup and carried it nearer to perfection. The charming device of a bird with outstretched wings marks most of his beautiful examples.

(From Taciti Opera. *Venice*, 1473. *Blue morocco. British Museum.* 10 × 7 *inches.)*

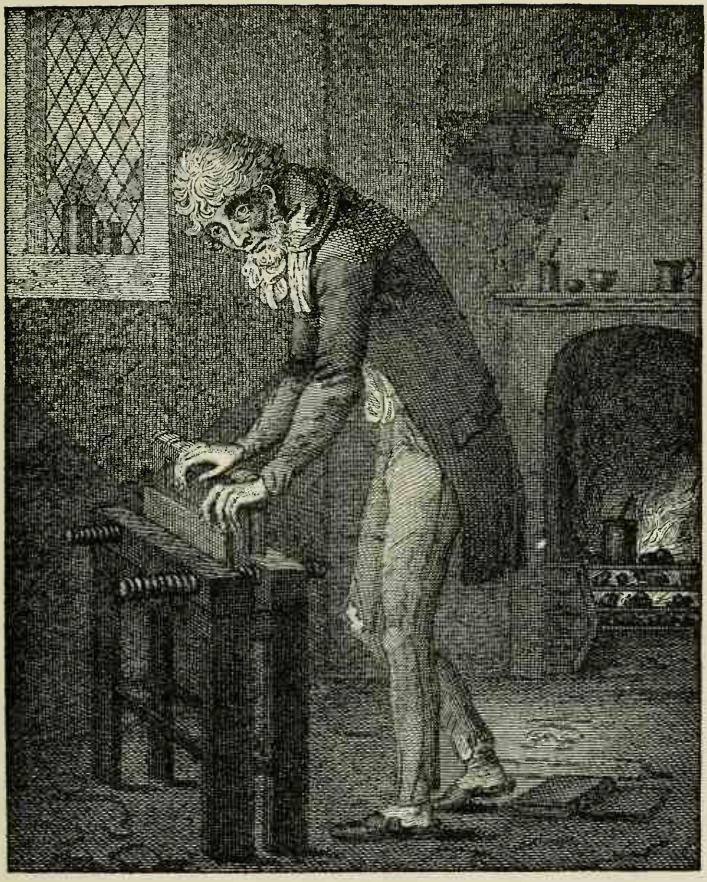
The first master binder in England who did not combine with his own vocation that of printer was John Gibson. He was appointed Royal Binder in 1581, and served James I, son of Mary, Queen of Scots. The books produced during this period differ little from those preceding them. During the reign of Charles I a considerably larger number of tools came into use, better engraved and of smaller size. The whole tendency was still French, but this time it was the Parisian gilders who were copied rather than the Lyonnese. A comparison between the copies and the originals is distinctly in favor of the French workmanship. One style of binding which was characteristically English covered the entire surface of the boards with a diaper of small circles or lozenges enriched by figure tools, and heavily gilded.

The Civil Wars further postponed the real development of bookbinding as an art in England. After the Restoration of Charles II, in 1660, Samuel Mearne was granted the office of Bookbinder to the King for life. The pecuniary value of this position would not seem to be particularly attractive, as it yielded a retaining fee of only £6; but the eagerness with which printers and binders sought Royal appointments, and the pride with which they held them, is evidence enough that the office included other perquisites. For the next twenty years one finds in the accounts of the Great Wardrobe references to Prayer Books and Bibles bound by Mearne to be used in the Royal chapels, and other volumes which were probably bound for the Royal library at St. James' Palace. In the *Calendars of State*

are entries dating from 1660 to 1667 of thirty-six almanacs bound in turkey leather "for the use of the King and Council." Methods may have changed since then, but manners were essentially the same, for Mearne's bill for this work was disputed by the King, who contended that the bindings were needlessly extravagant and the price too high!

In Samuel Mearne, England had for the first time a binder who, in the beauty of his designs and in the skill of his workmanship, could compare with the French artists of the same period. In his elaborate filigree gilding Mearne showed the French influence, but in the form and arrangement of his ornaments he introduced a style which was distinctively English. Many of his small stamps, which he combined with curves and lines, were floral in their nature. Another favorite stamp took the shape of a bird's head and beak. Mearne was exceedingly successful in getting a mass effect with these small stamps.

Most of the volumes bound by Mearne for Charles II were in red morocco bearing the Royal cipher, which consisted of two crowned C's facing each other, partially enclosed in a spray of palm. He developed two distinct styles, in the simpler of which he employed only rectangular lines with small ornaments at the corners, while the title was usually stamped in letters of generous size. The panels are filled either with the crowned cipher or with smaller stamps of his own design and cutting. It was this style that Roger Payne later copied and improved. In his more elaborate style, Mearne replaced the rectangular lines with decorated



ROGER PAYNE IN HIS WORKSHOP

"In this place were executed the most splendid specimens of binding; and here, upon the same shelf, were mixed together old shoes and valuable leases, bread and cheese, with most costly manuscripts or early printed books."

(From Dibdin: Decameron.*)*

fillets, frequently colored black. Sometimes he employed the "cottage" design, so called because it resembles the gable of a cottage roof.

The work of Samuel Mearne, and, later, that of his son Charles, produced a lasting effect upon English bookbinding, even though for some years after their death binding in England fell into a decadence.

I like Roger Payne's work better than that of any other English binder down to Cobden-Sanderson. He was the Edgar Allen Poe of the craft, producing his best work while yielding freely to his intemperate habits. His genius reclaimed binding as an art and gave England a national style. Payne is entitled to particular credit because, finding the craft so far debased, he not only produced work of such high artistic merit, but reformed the entire process. About 1770 he was established as a bookbinder by his namesake, Thomas Payne, the famous London bookseller, in a little shop near Leicester Square. Dibdin, in his *Decameron*, gives a portrait[1] of him — a shabby little old man, standing in a small room surrounded by books on the floor, a pot of glue on the fire. "In this place," says Arnett, "were executed the most splendid specimens of binding; and here, upon the same shelf, were mixed together old shoes and valuable leases, bread and cheese, with most costly manuscripts, or early printed books." At first his work seems to have been mostly repairing old books, but it was not long before his proficiency brought business enough to warrant him in striking out for himself.

[1] See Plate on p. 215.

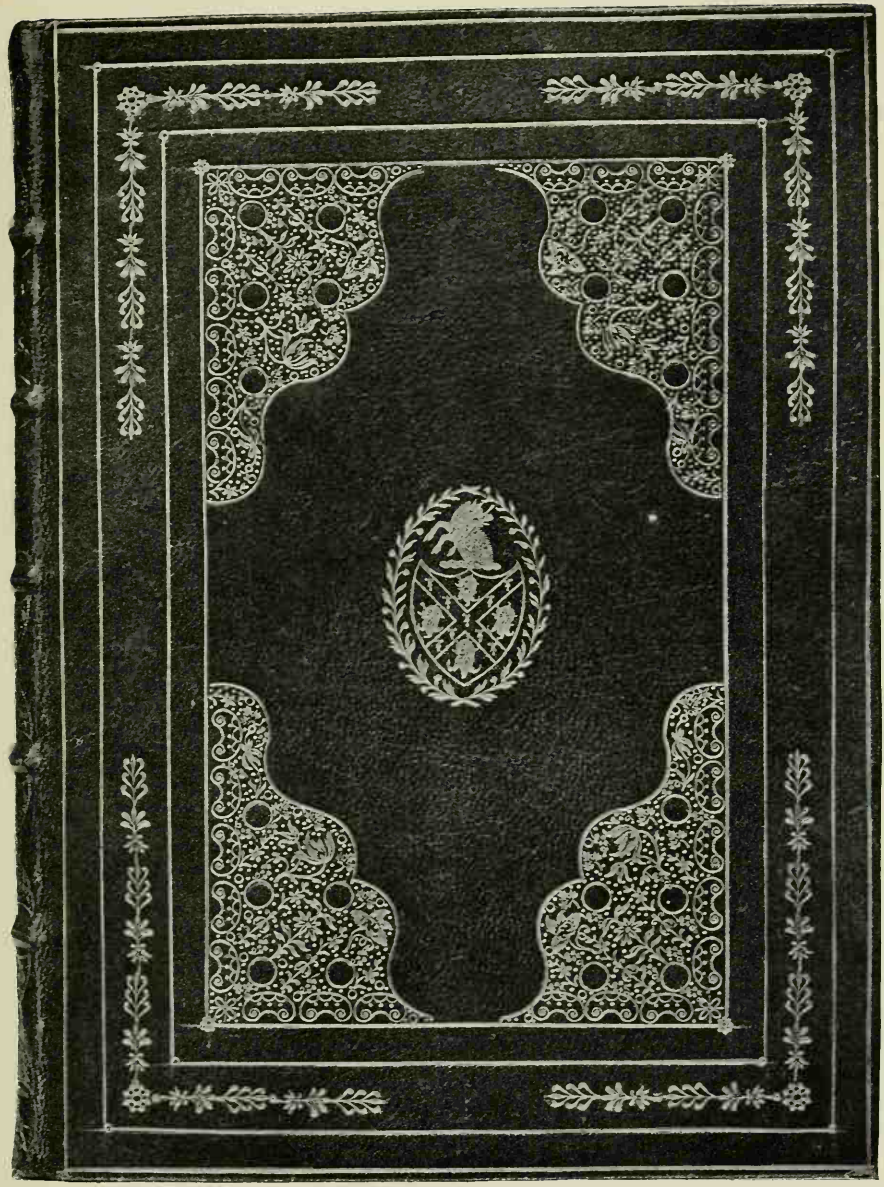
Payne was an eccentric genius. He did everything with his own hands, even to the coloring of his end papers and the making of his own tools. There is no doubt that he made himself entirely familiar with the work of Samuel Mearne, for several of his stamps are strikingly reminiscent. On the other hand, Payne cut original stamps of exceeding delicacy and beauty, which enabled him to produce bindings that stand among the best of the English examples of the art. No binder showed more scrupulous attention to minor details, and some of his innovations are in common use even at the present time.

In appropriating the more simple of the two styles Mearne had developed, Payne so handled it as to make it individual and distinctive. He added ornamentation to the rectangular lines in the form of beautiful and delicately stamped corners, with ornamentation filling the space between the inner panel and the outer edge of the book.[1] He was fond of leaving the center of the upper cover blank, but on occasion filled it with a coat of arms. He was the first English binder to consider the inside of his boards.

I particularly like the Payne covers because the binder was so unerring in fitting the designs to the subject. Instead of being a thing apart, the decoration on the outside of a Payne volume is always a motivation for the text within. This painstaking characteristic was echoed even in his bills. Here is a paragraph taken from one dated 1774:

"The subject of this book being Rusticum, I have

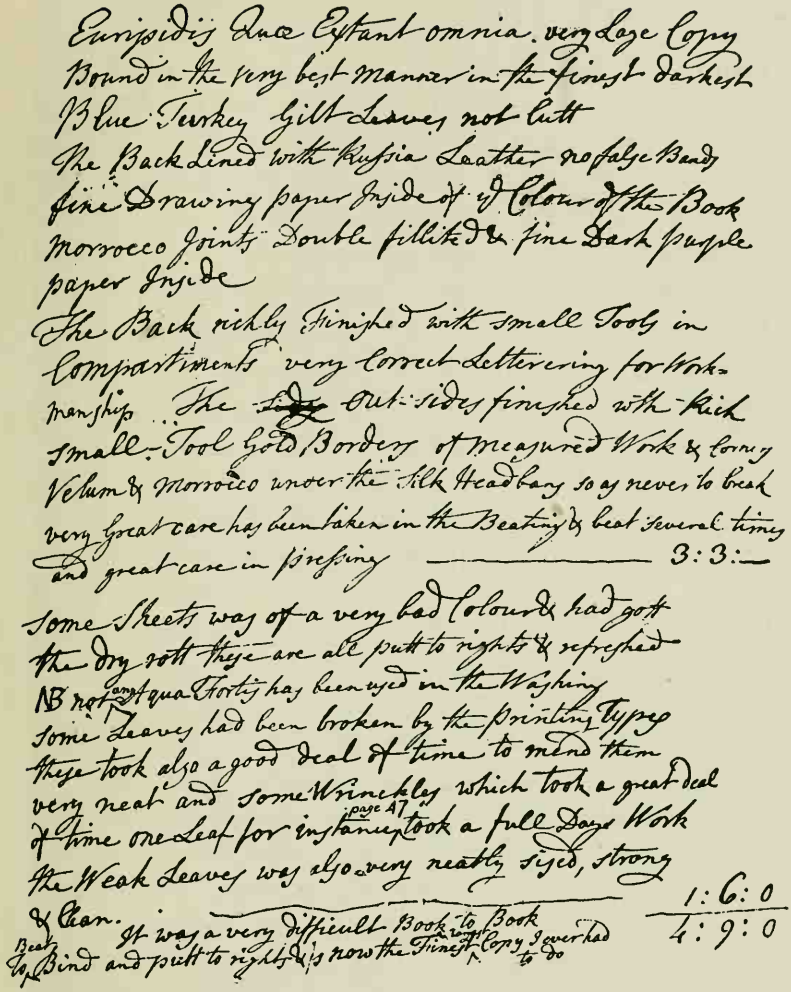
[1] See Plate on opp. page.



A ROGER PAYNE BINDING

A copy of the first book printed by Aldus Manutius. When this fell into the hands of the Rev. C. M. Cracherode, he turned the volume over to Roger Payne for an appropriate cover. The leather is smooth, olive-brown morocco. The ornamentation on the sides and back is exceptionally fine and is characteristic of Payne's wonderful tooling.

(From Lascaris: Erotemata. *Venic* , 1494. *British Museum.* 8 × 6 *inches.)*



Euripidis Quæ Extant omnia. very Large Copy
Bound in the very best manner in the finest darkest
Blue Turkey Gilt Leaves not Cutt
The Back Lined with Russia Leather no false Bands
fine Drawing paper Inside of ye Colour of the Book
morrocco Joints Double fillited & fine Dark purple
paper Inside
The Back richly Finished with small Tools in
Compartiments very Correct Letterering for Work-
manship. The ~~Side~~ Out-sides finished wth Rich
small Tool Gold Borders of measured Work & Corners
Velum & morrocco under the Silk Headbans so as never to break
very Great care has been taken in the Beating & beat several times
and great care in pressing ——————— 3:3:—

Some Sheets was of a very bad Colour & had gott
the dry rott these are all putt to rights & refreshed
NB not any Aqua Fortis has been used in the Washing
Some Leaves had been broken by the Printing Types
these took also a good deal of time to mend them
very neat and some Wrinckles which took a great deal
of time one Leaf for instance page 47 took a full Days Work
the Weak Leaves was also very neatly sized, strong
& Clean. ——————— 1:6:0

It was a very difficult Book to Book
to Beat Bind and putt to rights & is now the Finest Copy I ever had to do 4:9:0

A ROGER PAYNE BILL

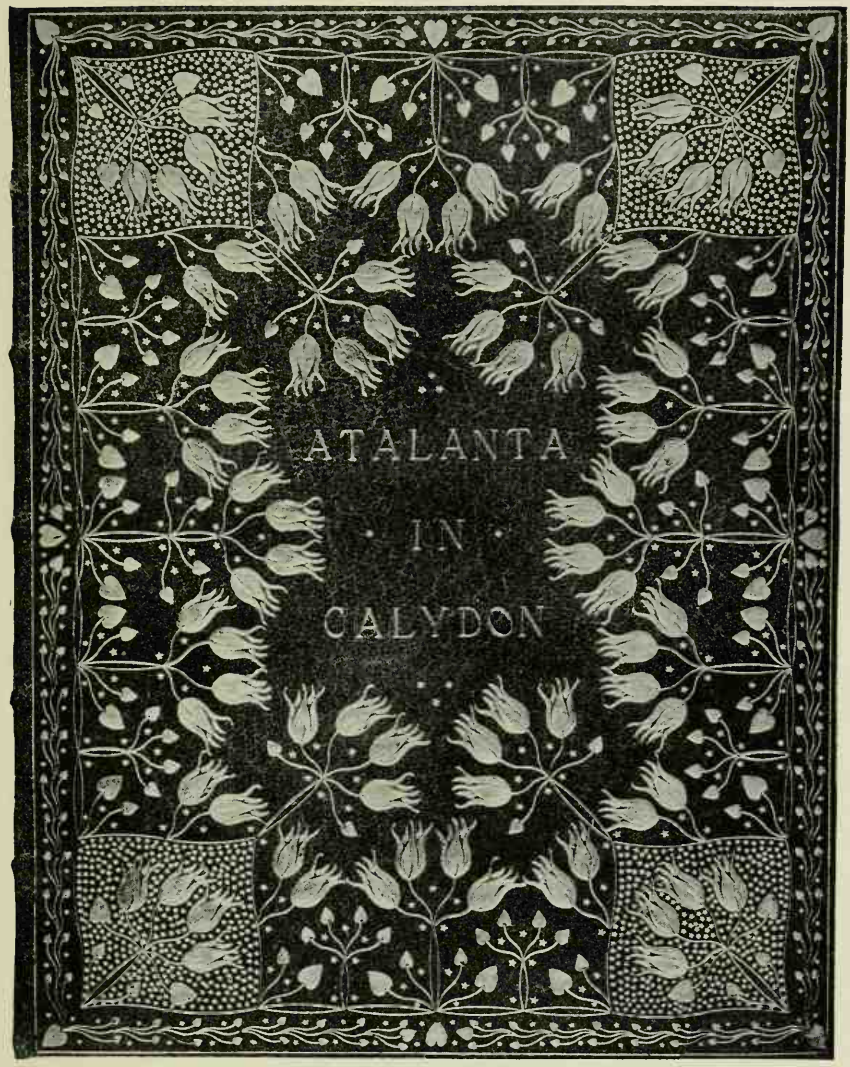
Imagine a modern binder rendering a bill like the above! These bills are now considered as valuable as the Payne bindings.

(British Museum.)

ventured to putt The Vine Wreath on it. I hope I have not bound it in too rich a manner for the book. It takes up a great deal of time to do These Vine Wreaths. I guess within Time I am certain of measuring and working the different and various small Tools required to fill up the Vine Wreath that it takes very near 3 days Work in finishing the two sides only of the Book. But I wished to do my best for the Work — and at the same time I cannot expect to charge a full and proper price for the Work, and hope that the price will not only be found reasonable, but cheap .....0:18:0"

Roger Payne's work marked the high tide of excellence in England. For a time Charles Lewis carried on the traditions, counting among his patrons and admirers such collectors as the Earl of Spencer, Lord Grenville, and the Duke of Devonshire; but it was a losing struggle. After him, binding all over Europe deteriorated because of the slavish copying of old designs, varied only by occasional efforts to introduce a larger style of decoration, suitable rather for ornamenting the cloth cases of popular books than for dignified and pretentious volumes. Fine binding fell to perhaps its lowest level in England about 1850. There were binders who possessed technical skill, but decoration as such had lost its vitality and significance. The turn came with the William Morris era, and with the work of T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, who restored ornamentation to its proper level.

The British Museum is fortunate in having an illuminating collection of Cobden-Sanderson's bindings, showing the evolution from his first book, *Le Mare*



A COBDEN-SANDERSON BINDING

Cobden-Sanderson demonstrated his genius by combining simple elements in proper sequence. His workmanship was superb, and in gold tooling no English binder has been so successful. His work has had immense influence upon modern binding.

(From Atalanta in Calydon, 1888. *Green morocco. British Museum.)*

au Diable (1883), the plainest kind of leather binding, with gold letters and blank lines, down to his *Atalanta in Calydon* (1888), originally bound for his wife, in straight-grained green morocco, superb in design and workmanship. Of this latter book, the binder says of his purpose:

"In designing the pattern for *Atalanta in Calydon*[1] I had from the first, from long ago, the desire to express the ideas of a brand burning, and of swiftness, and with these I afterwards, by accident, mixed up the ideas of the green of the open country of Calydon, and the stability of hearts combined with a flickering, flame-like movement. On the inside I shall seek by the stars to express the supervening stillness, the immensity, which abides when passion is spent, and is even when passion is at its height."

A significant commentary on modern manufacture is given in the remark made by Dr. Henry Thomas, the accomplished assistant Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, the last time we examined the volumes together:

"We have had to take two of Cobden-Sanderson's best bindings from the exhibition case," he said, "because the leather has begun to fade."

This recalls the violent outburst of William Morris: "Leather is not good now. What used to take nine months to cure is now done in three. They used to say, 'What's longest in the tanyard stays least time in the market,' but that no longer holds good. People don't know how to buy now; they'll take anything."

[1] See Plate at p. 220.

Cobden-Sanderson demonstrated his real genius by combining simple elements in proper sequence, just as the early Italian binders had done in achieving their lasting fame. He made separate tools, for instance, of bud, or flower, or leaf, but used them in such a manner as to express a definite feeling of growth. His workmanship was superb, and in gold tooling no English binder has been so successful. His style of design has had immense influence upon the best modern binding, and through his example it is now recognized that an artist binder's tools must be so connected in their use as to form an organic whole.

It is a fair question to ask why no reference has been made to fine binding in America. I wish that the omission might have been inadvertent; but this is a phase of bookmaking that has never flourished in the United States. The cost of labor and the duty on leather have made fine binding in America practically prohibitive. We have had a few binderies which have produced distinctive work, but the workmen have not been Americans, and the establishments have been subsidized by wealthy collectors. We have had a few American artist binders — notably women — whose volumes compare favorably with those of England or France, but they are conspicuous by their rarity. American collectors have never been so keen on bindings as they have been on imprints or dates.

As the binding of books began to approach modern times leather became too expensive a covering to be

practical. Vellum was employed as a substitute, but the modern custom of heating houses by steam made this material undesirable. I once visited the library of a well-known American collector who boasted the proud distinction of possessing William Morris' own copies of the Kelmscott books. I was permitted to open the glass door of the bookcase, to take one of the volumes in my hand. Imagine my horror to find it warm to the touch! The bookcase backed squarely against heated steam pipes!

In the early part of the nineteenth century such utilitarian volumes as dictionaries, schoolbooks, and books of reference were bound in roan or sprinkled sheep, but other publications appeared in paper boards, with printed labels. These had the unhappy tendency to crack at the joints, so calico or cloth came to be used for the shelfback. From this it was a natural evolution to employ cloth for covering the entire board, and credit for this innovation, upon which our modern method of binding rests, is variously given to R. E. Lawton, of Blackfriars, and Archibald Leighton, of London. Mr. Leighton is surely entitled to the credit of suggesting the idea of embossing the cloth, introducing a method which is essentially the same as that employed today.

The first volume bound in cloth is said to have been made up of sheets of music in manuscript, in 1823. This curiosity came to the notice of Pickering, the London publisher, who was then about to issue his Diamond Edition of the Classics, and he decided to use cloth covers. Paper labels were used until 1832,

when John Murray, the London publisher, first used gold stamping upon an edition of Byron's *Life and Works*.

Cloth skilfully stiffened, calendered, and embossed, as it is today, is an obvious material to use on volumes which are intended for superficial use, and the multiplicity of shades now available offer untold opportunity for artistic stamping in gold or ink. I wish the publisher more often took full advantage of this opportunity! The design is too frequently made by an artist who knows little or nothing of the subject matter or the decorative scheme of the inside. "Some subtle relation there should be," Cobden-Sanderson once said, "between the inside and the outside of a book, between its contents and ornamentation; and no one can produce a right design for a book who knows nothing about the book."

The present interest on the part of their readers in the physical beauty of even ordinary volumes, has encouraged publishers to pay more attention to this portion of the book. They have come to a realization that to make the cover attractive is not enough, that to make it unusual is not necessarily to make it attractive. They recognize the supreme fact that the Book only approaches perfection when each of its parts has been successfully considered in its relation to all its parts, and the whole is combined as an harmonious vehicle for the message sent by the author to the world.

CHAPTER VII

A Personality and a Shrine

VII

A PERSONALITY AND A SHRINE

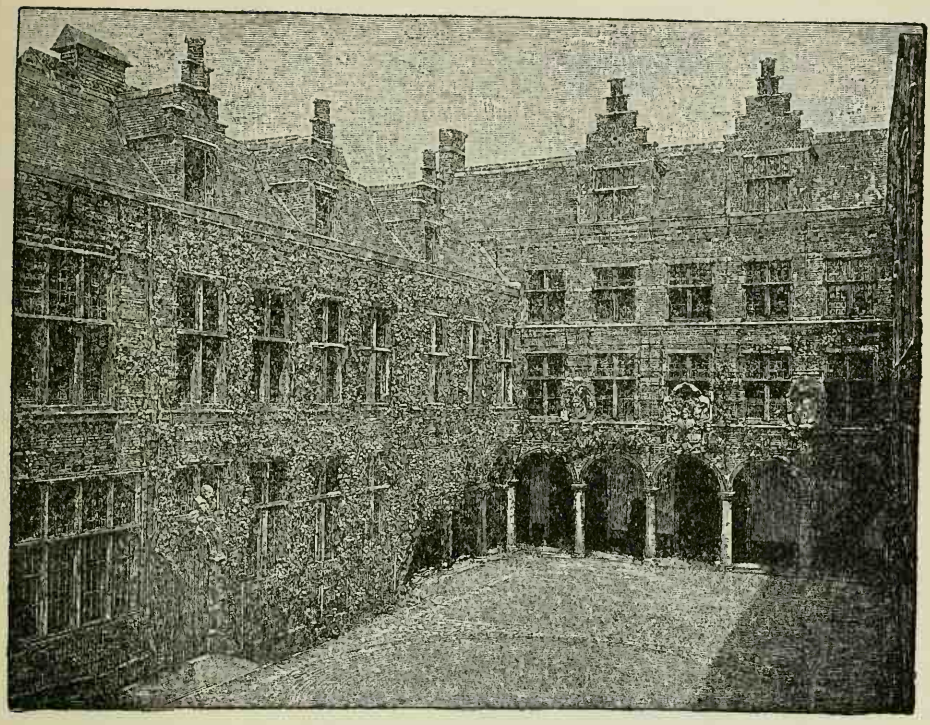
SOME wise writer once said that a man's personality is explained by his work, and it is equally true that a man's work is better understood by knowing something of his personality. Ever since I became interested in the old-time worthies of the Book I have been conscious of a vast difference in the vividness of their characterization. Fust and Schoeffer, Gutenberg, Jenson, the Étiennes, the Elzevirs, and even so recent a celebrity as John Baskerville, seem to me almost legendary figures of the far distant past. The *Letters of Indulgence* of 1454, the *Mazarin Bible* of 1456, the *Eusebius* of 1470, the *Royal Greeks* of 1540, the *Terence* of 1635, and the *Virgil* of 1757, are tangible evidences that they really existed; but the heroes themselves are so merged with their work as almost to lose individuality. On the other hand, there are others who have come to be as real to me as those artist printers whom I have personally known.

Christophe Plantin is one of the stellar lights in typography with whom I seem to have an intimate acquaintance. I know that experts classify him as belonging to the second rather than to the first group of great artist printers, but I cannot help feeling that, although his product averaged below the quality of

Aldus or of Robert Étienne, his contribution to the Book was in a way as great. Printing in the sixteenth century had changed from an art to a liberal art, and Plantin, by proving himself a liberal artist and a practical business man, met the conditions of the period as he found them; and through his courage, his public spirit, and his imagination, he held his work true to his ideals and far above that of any other printer of his epoch.

The first time I visited the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp, years ago, I had little knowledge of old Christophe's history, so naturally found in that historic shrine simply an astonishing number of typographic and other exhibits which contributed much in interest and information, not only to a maker of books but to the casual tourist. As a result of the impressions produced by that visit I received an incentive to become better acquainted with Plantin himself, and later visits have proved veritable pilgrimages as to a shrine, from which I have always gained encouragement and inspiration.

I wish I might make Christophe Plantin appear as real to you as he does to me. His portrait, which hangs in the Second Drawing Room of the Museum, painted for his son-in-law, Jean Moretus I, makes a physical visualization possible: the short-cropped hair and beard, the strong nose and piercing eyes, the firm but kindly mouth, which seems to smile a welcome. The white linen goffered collar over the black coat adds a picturesque touch of antiquity to the quiet dignity, while the expression on the face and the confidence in bearing give evidence that the great master printer



THE COURTYARD

Plantin-Moretus Museum.

(From "Harpers Magazine." Courtesy Harper and Brothers.)

not only was fully aware of his preëminence but knew that he knew.

All modern bookbuilders should be drawn to him by a common bond of sympathy, for many of the problems he had to meet and solve are the same as those we have been forced to recognize. In the fifteenth century Aldus competed against the hand-lettered volume; in the sixteenth as in the nineteenth century the competition was against inferior workmanship and materials. It requires even more courage to maintain a high degree of excellence when the world is satisfied with mediocrity than to produce well-made books because readers demand them. Thank Heaven that the twentieth century has developed so definite a demand for printing as an art!

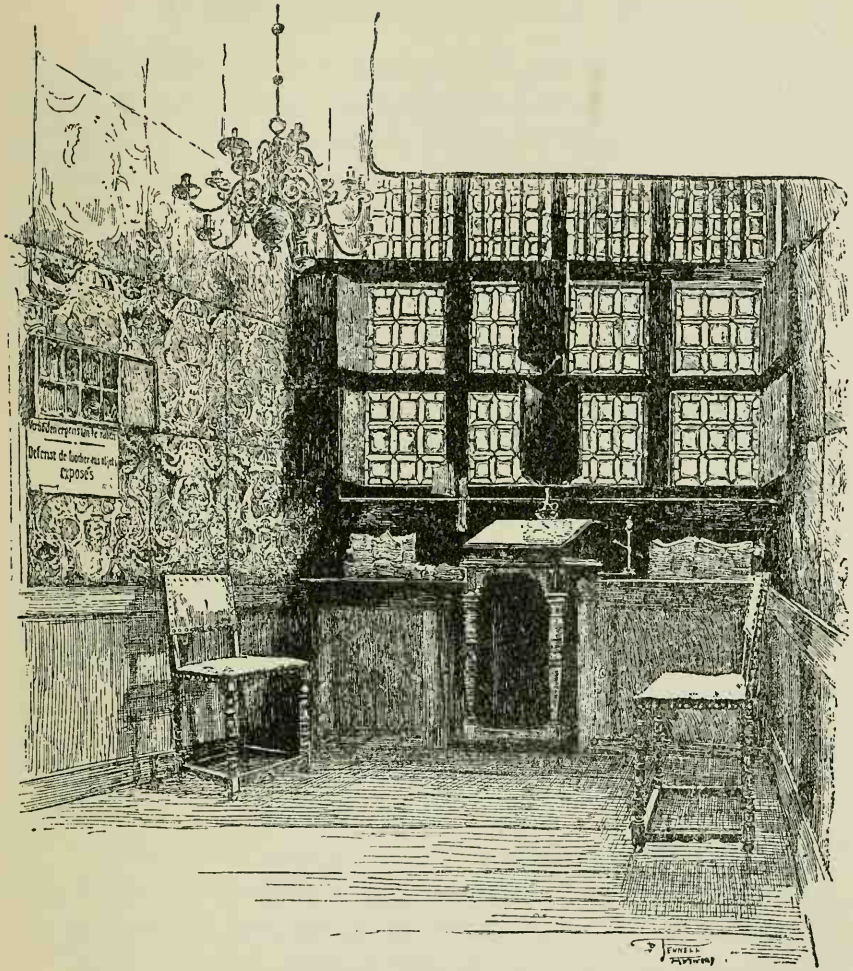
I remember once hearing the head of one of our best known private Presses remark, "I don't expect to make money out of my printing. I should be ashamed to do that." This printer has an independent income, which explains his ability to be indifferent to the financial return. During the existence of his Press he has maintained a wonderfully high average in quality, and has thus contributed conspicuously to the present public appreciation. Typography in America and England owes him a deep debt of gratitude for his material unselfishness in putting into his work more than he can hope to draw out of it. Yet printing to exist must recognize the economic relation of cost and price. Aldus and the Étiennes produced wonderful volumes, but barely eked out an existence. John Baskerville began his career as a printer with a fortune made out of the

japanning business, and died a poor man. Christophe Plantin lost money on his masterpiece, the *Polyglot Bible*, but left his family a comfortable fortune of over $200,000, and maintained his position as the greatest printer of his time by putting quality into low-cost books.

It is not usual to associate romance or beauty with a printing office, yet the relics of the Plantin Press, exhibited in Antwerp, represent both. The thousands of visitors who pass through the various rooms are attracted by more than the portraits, or the furniture, or the presses, or the types; but what the appeal is few probably could clearly state. Some know nothing of the significance of this collection, most know little. It is the intangible lure of the Book, and those who yield themselves to it receive back in proportion to their understanding.

The last time I was at the Museum, in 1924, as I stepped into the entrance hall I felt, even more strongly than before, a curious sensation of finding myself a part of the sixteenth century, having left all twentieth-century atmosphere checked with my cane at the entrance door. Although only a portion of the present Museum represents the original home in which Plantin lived, the additions and changes made by his successors have been so completely in accord with his own conception that it requires no stretch of the imagination to consider him a part of it all.

There is a bit of a mystery about Christophe's birth. Even the date has been a matter of discussion. On his tombstone the year 1514 is recorded, while in an



PLANTIN'S PRIVATE OFFICE

Plantin-Moretus Museum.

(Drawing by Joseph Pennell. Courtesy Grolier Club, New York.)

inscription beneath an engraved portrait of his father-in-law, Franciscus Raphelengius states emphatically that May, 1520, is the correct date, calling attention to a letter from Christophe to the Magistrates of Antwerp, dated 30 April, 1582, in which Plantin declares that at that time he was sixty-two years old.

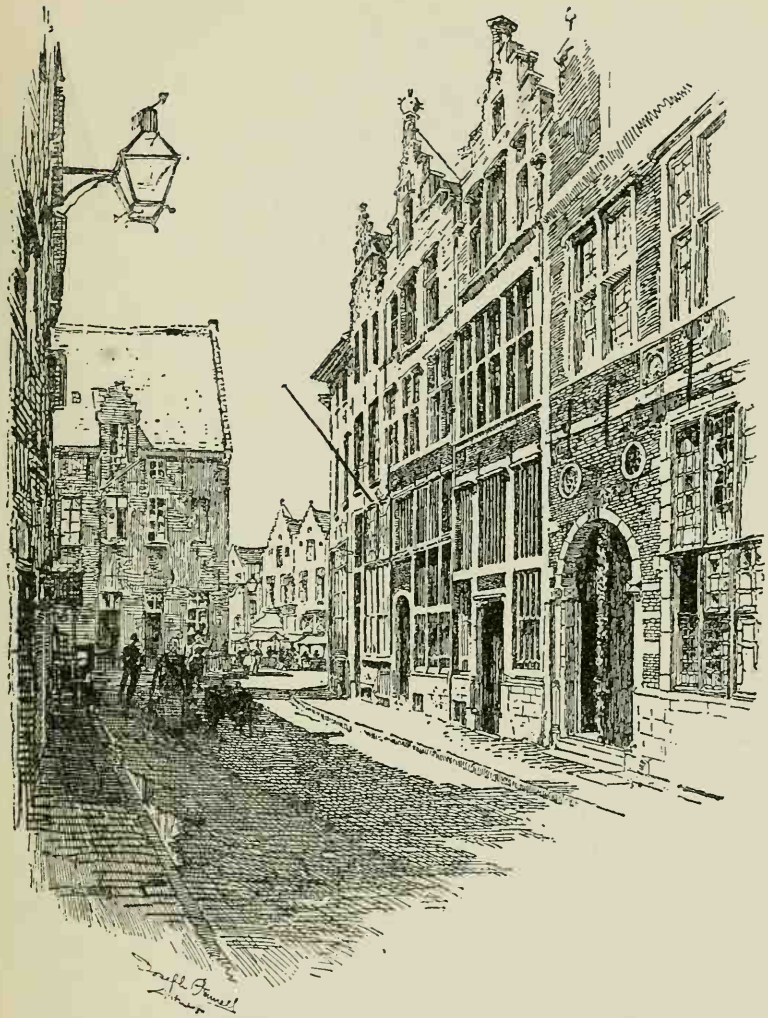
Some claim that Christophe was the son of the famous Charles de Tiercelin, while others, with equal vehemence, maintain that his father was a townsman of Saint Avertin, a small hamlet near Tours, in France. The latter theory is probably correct, and the confusion perhaps arises from the fact that the boy's mother died of the plague while he was very young, and his father moved to Lyons to escape the contagion, later going on to Orleans and to Paris. Little Christophe was left behind in Lyons with a small sum of money, in the care of Claude Porret, *audencier* of the Church of Saint Just. This was the last the youngster ever saw or heard of his father! He grew up with Porret's own son, Peter, whom he loved as a brother, until he grew old enough to strike out for himself.

From this point on the records are fairly clear. Young Christophe apprenticed himself to Robert Macé, printer in Caen, where he remained until after his marriage in 1546, then going on to Paris in search of fortune. Here he was reunited with his foster brother, Peter Porret, and their Damon and Pythias relations at this time undoubtedly gave rise to the unplausible theory that both boys were sons of Charles de Tiercelin. This famous nobleman died, so the story goes, leaving behind him little save glory; and the two boys,

proud of their birth and unwilling to cast a shadow on the illustrious coat-of-arms by engaging in trade, assumed the names of two plants, the plantain and the leek, — or in French, *Plantin* and *Porret*, — Christophe setting up a bookshop in Antwerp to which he added bookbinding and the making of ornamental cases for books, while Peter became an apothecary.

Those who are familiar with the glories of the Étiennes may well wonder why Christophe, a Frenchman and a printer, should have left Paris when the opportunity would seem to be at hand to continue the work which had made France supreme in the art of printing. But that is to forget the censorship which made the printer's life so irksome. Henri II ascended the French throne just at this time, and one of his earliest pronouncements was that he would recognize heresy as high treason. Dolet, condemned publisher, was hanged and then burned at the stake; Robert Étienne, master printer to the new King's father, escaped with his life only by fleeing to Geneva. This made the youthful Christophe pause and think, with the result that he considered discretion the better part of valor, and selected as an abiding place that city which welcomed immigration, and at that time surpassed Paris and even London in commerce, wealth, and artistic appreciation.

The latter part of the Plantin-Porret story at least is substantiated. Christophe prospered in his little Antwerp shop, and his jewel boxes, his cases, his bindings, and his mosaics became famous. His customers included personages of high degree, among them no less than the Secretary to King Philip II of Spain,



THE FRONT OF THE PLANTIN-MORETUS MUSEUM

Built by François Jean Moretus in 1761.

(Drawing by Joseph Pennell. Courtesy Grolier Club, New York.)

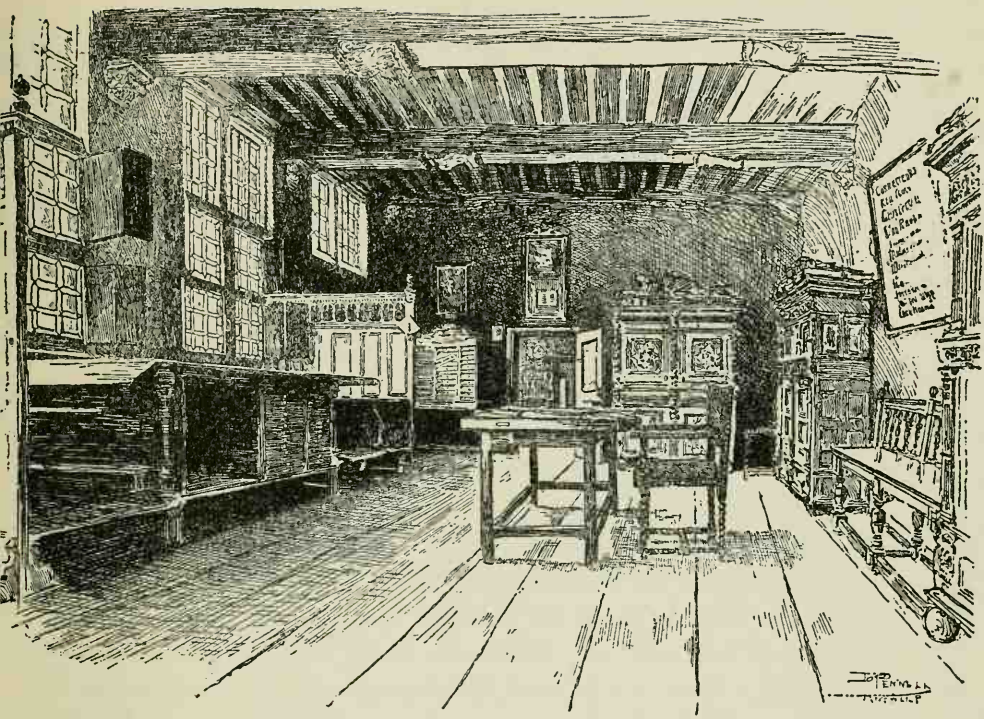
Gabriel de Çayas. It was through a commission given Christophe by this patron that an unhappy accident occurred. The Secretary had secured a valuable stone, intended as a gift to his Royal Master, and desiring a fitting case in which to enclose the gem he gave the commission to Plantin. One night at dusk, having completed the task, Plantin set out to deliver the precious casket, preceded by a servant carrying a torch. Suddenly he was set upon by a band of masked ruffians, who mistook him for a guitar player whom they sought to punish for some offense. The defenseless victim was grievously stabbed, while the miscreants made good their escape. Old Farinalius, highly famed as a surgeon, with the aid of Dr. Gorophous Becanus, succeeded in saving Plantin's life; but his right hand had forever lost its usefulness.

I like to think that it was Fate that forced Christophe Plantin to abandon the manufacture of gadgets, no matter how artistic, and return to the making of books; but at any rate the history of printing was distinctly altered by this accident. Even during this same year, 1555, Plantin issued his first publication, a little volume in Italian and French, and from that moment he forged steadily ahead, leaving other printers far behind.

There is something splendid in the determination with which Christophe met adversity and conquered it; but he needed all his courage, for Nemesis seemed to pursue him without mercy. The death struggle had begun between the State, the Press, and the Church, and Plantin had inadvertently placed himself in the

very center of the battle ground! In 1562 a tract was issued from the Plantin office which the Margrave of Antwerp declared to be heretical. Three of Plantin's workmen and Plantin himself, *in absentio* (he being in Paris at the time), were condemned, and his property was seized and sold at auction. Later, Plantin was able to prove that the offending treatise had been printed without his knowledge, but the workmen were sent to the galleys. Fortunately his friends had bought in most of the property when sold at auction, so the harassed printer was not hopelessly ruined; but the persecution was coming too close. He preferred the galleys of the printing office to the galleys of the Spaniards, so, during the next year, he found refuge in Paris. Then, the tempest having subsided, he returned to Antwerp, and formed one of the earliest printing and publishing associations, including his loyal friends Charles and Corneille Bomberghe (the latter a famous typecutter), Jacques de Schotti, and the same Doctor Becanus who had previously saved his life. Plantin became the managing director of the company.

This partnership lasted only four years, lightning again striking in the form of heresy charges, this time against the Bomberghe brothers and De Schotti, who had to fly for their lives. Then, through the good offices of his old patron at the bookshop, Gabriel de Çayas, still King Philip's Secretary, Plantin came fully under the protection of the King himself. I have an idea that old Christophe eventually possessed very mixed sentiments concerning King Philip, for while the King was indirectly the occasion for Plantin's later



PROOFREADERS' ROOM

Plantin-Moretus Museum.

(Drawing by Joseph Pennell. Courtesy Grolier Club, New York.)

fortune, for many years he was the direct cause of most of his tribulations.

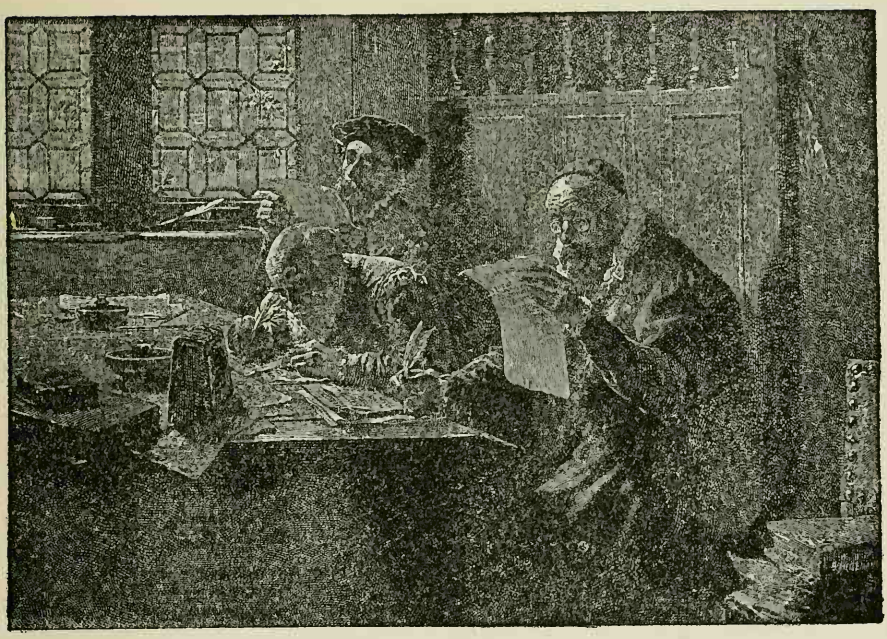
Plantin announced his desire to produce a polyglot Bible, and patrons of the art of printing in Frankfort, Heidelberg, and even Paris, overwhelmed him with proposals to be associated with the great work. King Philip had no idea of letting any such honor escape him, so, pushing the others aside, he agreed to subsidize this momentous undertaking by paying Plantin some $34,000 in exchange for twelve copies of the completed work, printed upon vellum — and these twelve copies would require more skins than there were in the entire extent of the Low Countries! Unfortunately the coffers of the King were nearly as empty as those of the private citizens who came under his domination, so the promises meant nothing, and Plantin suddenly discovered himself with his *Polyglot Bible* well under way, hopelessly involved in financial complications. With his other hand King Philip made the gesture of securing for Plantin a license from the Holy See, little realizing that the monopoly thus granted would eventually more than atone for his financial defaults. During the two hundred years of this license the Plantin office turned out literally millions of Missals, Breviaries, Diurnals, Psalters, Antiphonaries, and Offices of the Virgin.

If monarchs in those days were afflicted with consciences this may explain why King Philip was led to make further amends by appointing Plantin prototypographer. This was in 1570, when the great printer was fifty years old, and at the height of his fame. There

was no remuneration from the office, nor direct advantage beyond perhaps the freedom it gave from the burden of housing soldiers; but indirectly it placed Plantin in a position where he could prevent other printers from issuing volumes of questionable orthodoxy while he himself was limited by no such restrictions. I do not mean to suggest that Plantin ever took advantage of the situation (yet one may admit that the temptation must have been great!), but the position surely kept him in touch with what his rivals were doing.

By the year 1576 Plantin's office had grown to twenty-two presses, with one hundred and fifty employees, and a payroll of 200 gold crowns a day. In this year Christophe, with characteristic boldness (or rashness), moved the entire establishment to the present site of the Museum. Within six months the "Spanish Fury" burst upon Antwerp. King Philip's unpaid soldiers had rebelled at last, and took reprisals on the unoffending citizens. "Nine times," Christophe complained bitterly, "did I have to pay ransom to save my property from destruction; it would have been cheaper to have abandoned it." For eight or nine years business was practically at a standstill, and the city never fully recovered from the results of the devastation. At no time was the work in the Plantin office wholly stopped, but frequently only a single press would be running instead of the full quota of twenty-two.

Christophe endured this situation until 1583, when, despairing of peace and urged by his good friend Lipsius, the historian, formerly a corrector at the



PLANTIN'S PROOFREADERS AT WORK
(From a Painting by Van de Oudera.)

Plantin office, he left his Press in charge of his sons-in-law and went to Leyden, where he became Printer to the new University which William of Orange had given that city in recognition of the courageous resistance of the inhabitants to the Spanish assaults. Louis Elzevir, who became foreman of this new Leyden office, was the first of that famous family to appear in typographical records. Two years later the Duke of Palma recaptured Antwerp, and although Plantin had declared he would never return, the urge of the "Golden Compasses" was too strong, and he resumed his old-time labors.

The attractive name of the "Golden Compasses," with which Plantin had christened his establishment, had its origin in the famous device[1] adopted for the Plantin office: the hand emerging from a cloud, grasping a pair of compasses standing on one foot with the other turning, while a ribbon floats gracefully between the two points, on which are inscribed the words *Labore et Constantia*. On one side stands Hercules, symbolizing Labor; on the other a woman, personifying Constancy; and even the compasses themselves express the same thought — the turning arm representing Labor while the arm at rest is Constant.

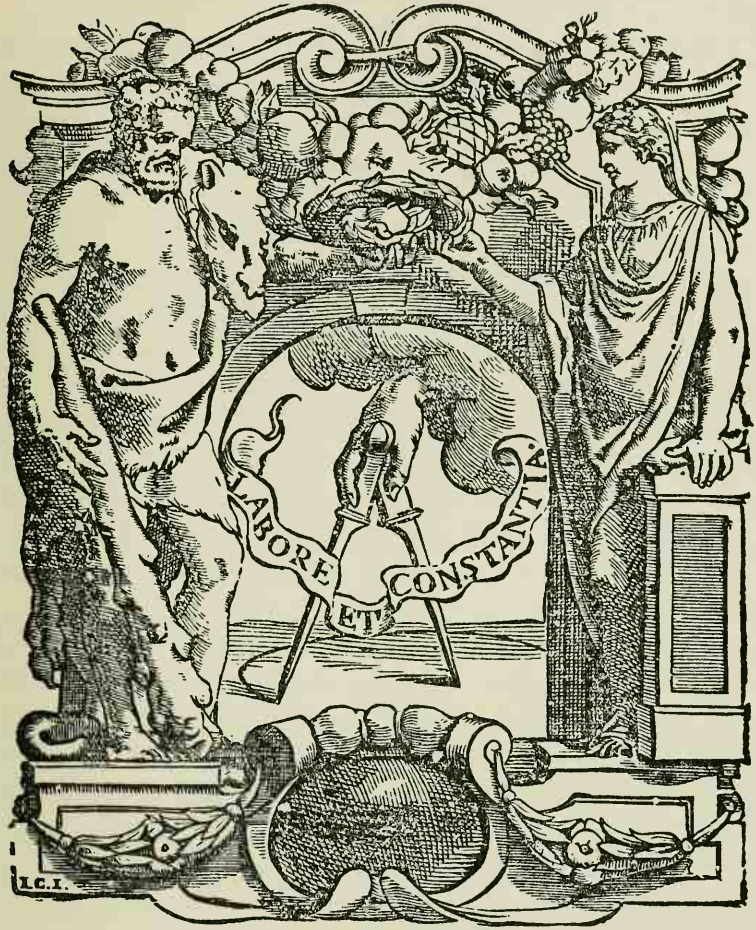
It was here, in the Marché du Vendredi where the Museum now stands, that the battle-scarred veteran spent the last four years of his life. When Plantin originally took the property over from Martin Lopez, in 1576, the frontage was on the Hoogstraat, near the old Saint Janspoort, and the white-stone front and

[1] See Plate on p. 249.

entrance which the visitor sees today, built by François Jean Moretus nearly two centuries later, was then only an unpretentious gateway. After the "Spanish Fury" swept over Antwerp the estate was cut in two, and Plantin occupied that portion with the garden which opened out on the Marché du Vendredi.

In this garden he erected three buildings, converting a coach house into a fourth, and here he housed his printing establishment. How he loved to ring in the changes on the Plantin mark! One of the buildings he called the "Iron Compasses," another the "Wooden Compasses," a third the "Copper Compasses," and, finally, the "Silver Compasses." By what magic form of alchemy he amalgamated these into the composite "Gold Compasses," producing the finest volumes of any printing office in the world, is explained by his motto, *Labore et Constantia*. The "Iron Compasses" and the "Wooden Compasses" now comprise the Folklore Museum, while the "Copper Compasses" and the "Silver Compasses" form part of the present Museum. The printing shop as we see it today was added by Plantin in 1579.

The inventory of 1575 still exists, showing that at that time Plantin possessed 38,128 pounds of cast type, divided into seventy-three different fonts. When he died, fourteen years later, the type room in Antwerp contained 44,605 pounds of type and the branch office in Leyden had 4,042 pounds. In 1565 Plantin owned seven presses, ten years later fifteen, in 1576 twenty-two; but after the "Spanish Fury" he sold seven of them. Even the remaining fifteen constituted a very



THE FAMOUS DEVICE OF THE PLANTIN OFFICE
(Designed by Rubens, and engraved by Jean Christophe Jegher.)

large office for that time. The Étiennes, for instance, never had more than four presses at work.

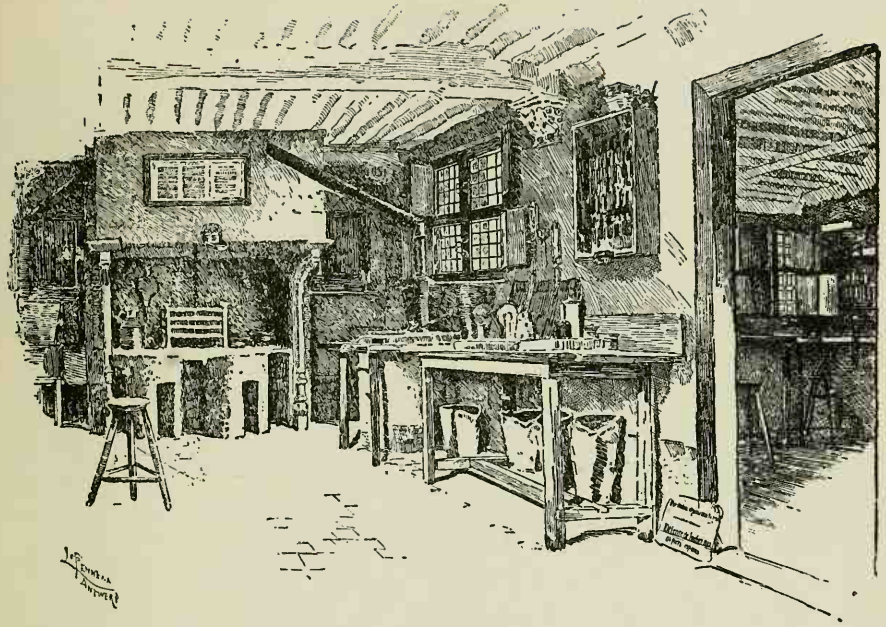
The greatest production of the Plantin office, the *Polyglot Bible*, was not made in these buildings which have now become the Plantin shrine, but in two of the earlier offices, called the "Golden Unicorn" and the "Golden Falcon," both situated in the Kammerstraat. Still, it is fitting that the Museum should stand on this spot, even though only Plantin's lesser books were produced here. It was here that he surrounded himself with those things that most interested him in his labors and in his private life, and it is this spot which he most impressed with his personality.

Old Christophe was fortunate, since he had no son, in having his son-in-law and grandson so competent and so loyal in their efforts to continue his policy and to maintain his high ideals. At his death, in 1589, the old man had stipulated that the management of the business should always pass into the hands of that descendant who, in the opinion of the family, was best qualified to handle it; and this injunction was carefully observed. As time went on and generation succeeded generation, the Plantin-Moretus family added to the substantial fortune already established. In the fifth generation Balthazar Moretus III enjoyed the distinction of being created a nobleman by King Charles II of Spain, with the special privilege of exercising his profession without derogation of nobility. This is particularly significant, for by the end of the seventeenth century printing in general had degenerated into a trade. King Charles recognized in the descendant of

Christophe Plantin one who still held fast to the family tradition that printing was an art, and that as such it might be exercised by nobleman or plebeian with equal grace. Printing was then, as it is today, an art or a trade according to the approach made to it by the printer.

The successors of Balthazar III managed the business with diminishing ability until 1866. By that time all the concessions had been lost, and the House of Plantin had become saturated with that commercial instinct which made its product no different from that of other printing offices the world over. Edouard Jean Hyacinthe Moretus-Plantin, great-great-grandson of Balthazar III, was its head, and he was sufficiently far removed from the ideals of old Christophe by the intervening three centuries to be willing to consider closing the establishment, and even to permit possession to pass from the family. Gradually rumors spread around Antwerp that he was negotiating for the sale of the property, and a small group of Belgians, who realized what the Plantin traditions meant to Antwerp and to Belgium, became alarmed by the prospect of having this historic plant transferred bodily to some other country.

These patrons placed the situation squarely before the National Government and the municipal authorities, finding an immediate response. After some political complications a plan was devised whereby the State and the City combined to purchase the property for 1,200,000 francs. This was in 1876 — just three hundred years after Christophe acquired the property.



TYPE FOUNDRY

Plantin-Moretus Museum.

(Drawing by Joseph Pennell. Courtesy Grolier Club, New York.)

Thus fortunately was established for all time this priceless exhibit of the home and workshop of the greatest printer of his period.

Can you wonder that I feel old Christophe's personality when I visit this historic shrine — even more than that of any of his successors, though the Moretus family occupied the property for several generations? Nothing exists today which so clearly shows how closely, in those times, a man's business was associated with his home life. Even though the family drawing rooms and bedrooms are now filled with cases containing autograph letters and papers and historic souvenirs, no one can fail to receive the intangible impression that the former occupants are not far distant.

To some visitors the greatest interest centers in the sixteenth-century furniture and tapestries in the drawing rooms and chambers; to some the portraits by Rubens and other artists contribute in creating or establishing personalities; to the printer or to the lover of books these interests are but secondary.

There is a fascination in studying the external and internal influences expressed in any great masterpiece. A famous engineer who is about to plan a bridge makes himself familiar with the structures which have preceded him, and gains knowledge and inspiration that enable him to surpass previous effort; the architect approaches a new building project in the same way. Thus Plantin, before undertaking his *Polyglot Bible*, made an exhaustive examination of earlier volumes of similar nature — and I like nothing better than to handle these very publications, to discover in them those features

he adopted, and to note the pitfalls he avoided. In addition to the Latin of the *Gutenberg Bible*, Plantin had to consider the addition of three other parallel columns, in Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee; instead of being a straightforward printing and publishing problem, the text of the new Bible had to be ensured against heretical paragraphs. To gain the whole story, I must go back and forth between the Tapestry Drawing Room, where the volumes are exhibited, and the License Room, where I may study the documents which had to be secured before Plantin's publications could be issued — showing that in the case of the *Polyglot Bible*, for instance, permission was obtained only after five tedious years of diplomacy. And in the meantime more capital than he possessed was locked up in the inactive volumes!

I like to linger in the Proofreaders' Room,[1] and compare old Christophe's problems with those of his predecessors and successors. I am sitting in the very chair where Franciscus Raphelengius, Plantin's son-in-law and most accomplished corrector, used to direct that important side of the production. A great scholar was Raphelengius, formerly professor in the University of Cambridge, in England. He had to supervise and edit manuscripts in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Flemish, Dutch, and English,[2] and he commanded the largest salary of any member of Plantin's staff — no less than the equivalent of

[1] See Plate on p. 241.

[2] See title page, on page 33, of volume printed in Plantin's Leyden office, of which Raphelengius was placed in charge.

FRANCISCUS RAPHELENGIUS
Plantin's Son-in-law and Chief Corrector at the Plantin Press.
(From Engraving by De Larmessin.)

$640 a year.[1] Faithful old Kilanus, fifty years in service, author of Latin poems, writer of prefaces, translator of manuscripts, and compiler of a Flemish dictionary, never received over $6.40 a week! And what of the younger Plantin daughters, who held copy, even in foreign languages, before they were twelve years old?

Yet the correctors received a princely income compared with the compositors, who averaged perhaps $200 a year, with a work day which began at five o'clock in the morning with no hour set for closing. And there were deductions to be made even from this meager income: a fine for errors exceeding six letters (splendid notion!); 64 cents for "initiation" fee, with monthly payments of $2.40 a month to the poor box. The binders received 8 cents a copy for the labor on an octavo sheepskin volume, 12 cents for a folio, and from 56 to 88 cents for a folio in full calf. The large skins of vellum used in the *Polyglot Bible* cost $3.60 a dozen.

The Plantin authors also were less exacting than at present. The careful records of the establishment, running unbroken from 1555 until the end of 1864, disclose the fact that Jean Isaac, in 1554, received in full for the copyright of his *Hebrew Grammar* one hundred copies of the book; and that Stadius, for his *Commentaries on Florus*, in 1567 was paid $32.00. And so it goes. The press correctors and revisers received all the way from board and lodging and $96.00 a year to $336.00. All this explains why the *Humanae Salutis Monumenta* of Arias Montanus, with seventy-two plates, could be

[1] The purchasing power of money in the sixteenth century is estimated at about ten times its present value.

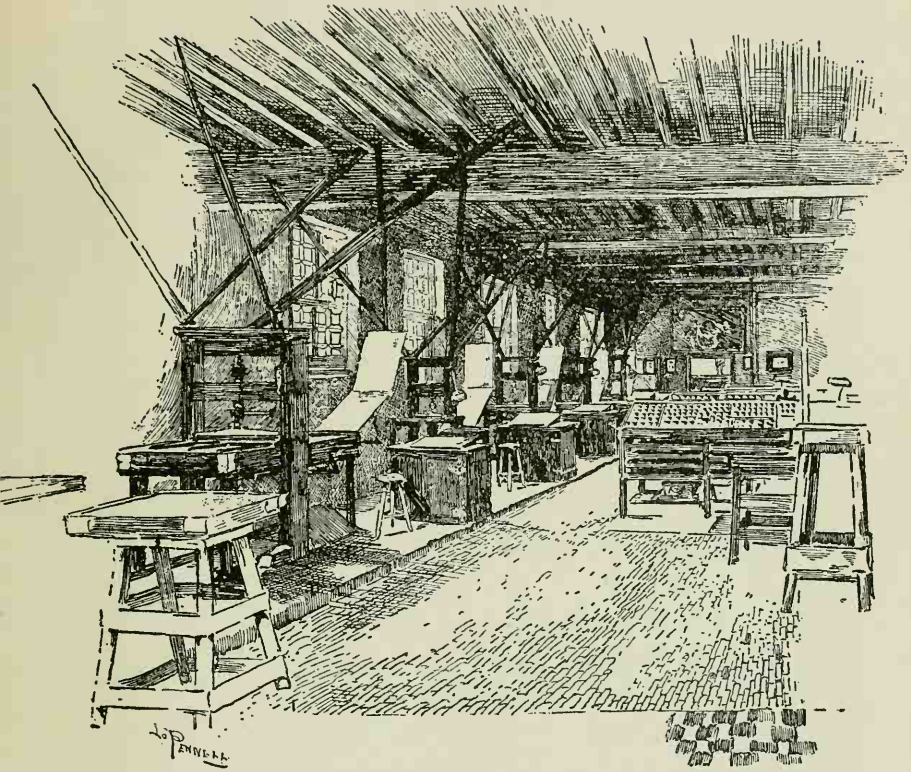
sold in the little shop for $4.20, and even the famous *Polyglot Bible* in eight volumes for $112.00, with a 15% discount to bookselling customers. No wonder that a Plantin octavo *Virgil* brought only forty cents!

I wander through the Type Foundry,[1] attracted by the molds with which old Christophe cast his characters. I wonder if he would have been interested in the modern facilities for securing machine-made type with only that effort required to dictate a letter or to make a telephone call! I suspect he would still prefer the prestige of owning the exclusive designs made for him by Robert Grandjon or Guillaume Le Bé, and cut by Guyot or Van Everbrocht, even though he had to cast the characters laboriously by hand, using his own molds and punches. In those days a printer's types brought him as much reputation as his work, and expressed his own personality.

When I enter the Pressroom I instinctively listen for the rumble made by the revolution of the cylinders; but even had Plantin's full quota of twenty-two presses been at work, I should have heard only the fall of the tympan frames upon the bars. The last time I was there a single press was turning out the souvenir copies of Christophe's famous sonnet, "The Happiness of This World," composed in the original Plantin types.[2] But two of old Christophe's original presses still remain, the same in principle as those used in our day by Cobden-Sanderson at the Doves Press, and capable of printing sheets as creditably as can be produced with all our boasted material advancement.

[1] See Plate on p. 253.

[2] See Plate on p. 265.



THE PRESSROOM

Plantin-Moretus Museum.

(From Drawing by Joseph Pennell. Courtesy Grolier Club, New York.)

MARTINE PLANTIN

Wife of Jean Moretus I, and one of the "shop girls" of the Plantin Press.
(From a Photograph of a Painting at the Plantin-Moretus Museum.)

The editions printed on these presses were not as small as I had supposed. Plantin never issued less than 1250 copies without a subsidy, and of the *Pentateuch* in Hebrew he ran 3900 copies. The little bookshop dispensed only a fraction of his output, copies being sold by booksellers at fairs or in other cities. Perhaps Plantin would have admitted that Aldus and Robert Étienne had maintained a higher average in quality, but he might well have added, with a touch of pride, "I proved for all time to come that quality in low-cost books can be made practical."

The little bookshop, where Martine and Madeleine Plantin used to serve as shop girls, at present contains framed exhibits; but as I stand there I can easily imagine the train of scholars and learned men who passed in and out the narrow door, examining and taking away with them the precious volumes, — from the stern Duke of Alva to the black-robed professors and the students from the Universities, — all seeking the power that comes from the knowledge that is in books. Perhaps modern bookstores might count upon better patronage if they employed shop girls clad in the quaint goffered collars and linen head dresses passed down to posterity in the portraits of the Plantin daughters.

There is a side to Christophe Plantin that is little known, but which might be suspected after a careful study of his eyes and mouth. Back of all his cleverness as a business man, in spite of his practicality in handling the perplexities arising from his printing and his publishing, he was full of temperament, and always felt the urge to express himself in poetic meter. Few of the

visitors to the Museum who purchase for a souvenir the little leaf on which the sonnet "The Happiness of This World" is printed on an ancient hand press, in the original Plantin type, realize that this is a masterpiece competing with the *Polyglot Bible* in establishing Christophe's enduring fame. No poem was so imitated during the seventeenth century, and this sincerest form of flattery has occasioned much discussion as to Plantin's right to the credit of authorship. The latest contributing evidence of Maurits Sabbe, one-time Director of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, seems to remove all reasonable doubt, and the Sonnet may be taken as an additional exposition of the great printer's personality:

To have a lovely home, free from the stress of life,
A garden wall bedecked with fragrant vine;
A modest progeny, a bit of fruit and wine,
A model household, and a faithful wife.

To have no debts, to be at peace with all;
A single love aside from our relations;
To ape no Prince, content with expectations;
To base our acts on justice, great or small.

Freely to live, without undue ambition,
To let our faith accomplish its fruition,
To hold our passions leashed in full control.

To keep our judgment free as passing breath,
To tell our beads while laboring for our soul,
And then, content, await the call of death.

LE BONHEUR DE CE MONDE.

SONNET.

AVoir une maiſon commode, propre & belle,
Un jardin tapiſſé d'eſpaliers odorans,
Des fruits, d'excellent vin, peu de train, peu d'enfans,
Poſſeder ſeul ſans bruit une femme fidéle.

N'avoir dettes, amour, ni procés, ni querelle,
Ni de partage à faire avecque ſes parens,
Se contenter de peu, n'eſpérer rien des Grands,
Régler tous ſes deſſeins ſur un juſte modéle.

Vivre avecque franchiſe & ſans ambition,
S'adonner ſans ſcrupule à la dévotion,
Domter ſes paſſions, les rendre obéiſſantes.

Conſerver l'eſprit libre, & le jugement fort,
Dire ſon Chapelet en cultivant ſes entes,
C'eſt attendre chez ſoi bien doucement la mort.

PLANTIN'S FAMOUS SONNET
" The Happiness of This World."
(Composed in the original Plantin types. 11 × 8½ *inches.)*

I like to stand in the old courtyard and ruminate on the permanence of the art of printing as symbolized by the gabled walls rising on all sides, broken only by leaded glass windows. The vines growing so luxuriantly over the bricks and stones find their parent stock in the roots set out by Christophe Plantin over three hundred years ago. They are symbolic. Books, of course, will live forever, and while they recall the old-time master printers, our familiarity with them lessens the full realization of that for which they stand. But to see the very types and presses and engravings that have outlived the power of Spain and Austria and France, to be able to follow the detailed records of a printing office with an unbroken succession of over three centuries, to become intimately acquainted with a personality so powerful as to be all-enduring, gives a new meaning to Plantin's guiding word-stars, *Labore et Constantia.*

L'ENVOI

OUR traveling has perforce been intensive in order to traverse even that limited portion of the Kingdom of Books included in our itinerary. Our conferences with the Prime Ministers have had to be curtailed, and our examination of the fascinating exhibits has been necessarily crowded into a space far too restricted. Yet the reader may have discovered that the more intimate he becomes with King Book, the more freely does that engaging and democratic monarch admit him to the inner shrine.

If this hope be realized, some readers, after making with the author this cursory journey into the Kingdom of Books, may be tempted to take side trips which will give a fuller acquaintance with and understanding of personages and things that have necessarily been sketched lightly in these pages. For such, the author takes much pleasure in presenting letters of introduction to a few well-qualified and amiable mentors:

To

T. F. DIBDIN: The Bibliographical Decameron, 3 volumes (1817).

A. A. RENOUARD: Annales de l'imprimerie des Aldes (1838).

G. A. CRAPELET: Robert Estienne (1839).

CHARLES PIETERS: Annales de l'Imprimerie des Elzevier (1858).

LE ROUX DE LINCY: Recherches sur Jean Grolier (1866).

AMBROISE FIRMIN-DIDOT: Alde Manuce et l'Hellénisme à Venise (1875).

L'ENVOI

JOSEPH CUNDALL: On Bookbindings Ancient and Modern (1881).

LÉON GRUEL: Manuel Historique et Bibliographique de l'Amateur de Relieures (1887).

HENRI BOUCHET: The Book: its Printers, Illustrators, and Binders (1890).

S. T. PRIDEAUX: Historical Sketch of Bookbinding (1893).

ALFRED W. POLLARD: Italian Book Illustration (1894).

RALPH STRAUS AND ROBERT K. DENT: John Baskerville. A Memoir (1907).

AUGUSTE BERNARD: Geofroy Tory. *Translated by George B. Ives* (1909).

ALFRED W. POLLARD: Fine Books (1912).

CHARLES DODEMAN: Le Long des Quais (1924).

MAURITS SABBE: Plantin, the Moretus, and their Work (1926).

THOMAS JAMES COBDEN-SANDERSON: Journals (1926).

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THIS VOLUME is composed in the Fournier type, revived by the Lanston Monotype Corporation, London, from the beautiful face designed in the eighteenth century by Pierre Simon Fournier, of Paris.

The cover, a modern adaptation of the Nicolas Ève *fanfare* design, used on a copy of *Valerii Maximi Dictorum*, Antwerp, 1574, is designed by Enrico Monetti.

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